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ABSTRACT

This report examines the "Wave One" school districts in New York State as they expanded into the second year of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK). Through surveys with district UPK coordinators and analysis of final reports submitted to the state education department, information was gathered about the implementation, programming, and practices of the districts that began UPK in 1998-1999, the first program year of UPK, and continued into the 1999-2000 year. This report presents findings and provides recommendations to district planners and state officials regarding ways to enhance community planning and service delivery. Findings and recommendations are highlighted under six main topics: (1) universal access; (2) diversity; (3) collaboration among school districts, community-based programs, and families; (4) classroom practices; (5) teacher preparation and support; and (6) financing. Program successes and challenges are also detailed. When asked to identify UPK successes, survey respondents cited support from their district boards of education, working relationships with community-based providers, meeting the needs of children, and overall community support for UPK. Ongoing challenges were identified as inadequate funding levels, shortages of classroom sites, fund distribution procedures, and lack of transportation. The report's two appendices include an annotated bibliography of universal prekindergarten planning guides and materials on curriculum, assessment, and preschool education; and the survey instrument. (Contains 19 references.) (KB)

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Collaborating for Kids

New York State
Universal Prekindergarten
1999-2000

Kristi S. Lekies and Mon Cochran

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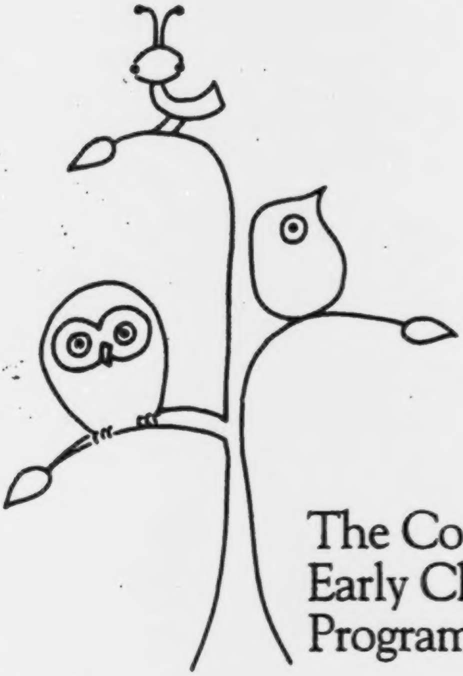

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CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
Martha Van Rensselaer Hall Ithaca, NY 14853-4401 Telephone: 607-255-2457 Fax: 607-255-8767
E-mail: cecp@cornell.edu Website: www.human.cornell.edu/hd/cecp/

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The Cornell Early Childhood Program
Department of Human Development
Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853-4401

Telephone 607-255-2457
e-mail cecp@cornell.edu

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To the UPK directors and coordinators in local school districts across New York State, whose collaborative spirit and commitment to excellence have built a solid foundation for UPK.

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Forward

Two years ago, the Cornell Early Childhood Program prepared a report entitled *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*, which examined the plans of all school districts participating in Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) during the first year of program implementation, 1998-1999. The authors presented a set of guiding principles for early care and education programs, key findings in a number of core areas, a range of innovative and noteworthy activities, and recommendations for future planning. The report was distributed widely throughout New York Sate as well as to other states as a means of providing useful information to those developing UPK and other prekindergarten programs.[1]

Since this time, the Cornell Early Childhood Program continues to take an active interest in UPK and is following its implementation by the first-year ("Wave One") districts. Key questions guiding this inquiry include: What does district programming actually look like? Are schools and community agencies working together? Is the program meeting the needs of children and families?

The present report draws on results from a survey with district UPK coordinators and on analysis of final reports submitted to the State Education Department.

The present report, *Collaborating for Kids,* builds on the findings from *Promising Practices.* It draws on results from a survey with district UPK coordinators and on analysis of final reports submitted to the State Education Department. Suggested audiences include:

- ☐ *First time school districts* planning a new UPK program.
- ☐ *Districts already implementing UPK* and planning succeeding years of the program.
- ☐ *Districts that chose not to implement UPK this year* but may do so in the future.
- ☐ *Early care and education advocates* who wish to promote successful UPK programs locally and statewide.
- ☐ *Community agencies* interested in forming collaborative arrangements with local school districts.
- ☐ *Colleagues in other states* where UPK programs are being planned or are already underway.

The New York State Universal Prekindergarten Program has considerable potential for enhancing the development of preschoolers across the state while improving the overall quality of local early care and education systems. The success of the UPK program will depend largely on how it is implemented by local districts. The Cornell Early Childhood Program is pleased to contribute what we have learned from Wave One districts as they expanded into the second year of UPK. We recommend that Collaborating for Kids be used with several other publications already available that provide excellent guidance to those planning and implementing UPK programs. These publications include:

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[1] S. A. Hicks, K. S. Lekies, and M. Cochran, Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten (Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program, 1999). Copies are available through the Cornell Early Childhood Program or at the website www.human.cornell.edu/hd/cecp/.

- Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs
- Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers
- Emergent Curriculum
- A Guide to Cost Allocation Procedures: Implementing Strategies for Universal Prekindergarten
- A Guide to Early Childhood Teacher Preparation and Certification
- Implementing Strategies for Universal Prekindergarten: The Advisory Board's Role
- Implementing Universal PreK in New York City: Blended Funding and Other Financial Considerations
- Meeting the Challenge of Child Care Expansion in New York City 1999-2000: A Forum and Dialogue
- Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy in the Early Years.
- Seeds of Success: State Prekindergarten Initiatives 1998-1999
- Steps to Universal Prekindergarten Guidebook: A Resource for Superintendents, School Boards, Prekindergarten Policy Advisory Boards, Teachers, Early Childhood Professionals, Policymakers, Parents, and Citizens, Vols. I and II.
- The Work Sampling System and Early Screening Inventory – Revised

An annotated reference list of these resources is provided in Appendix A.

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We have many people to thank for the publication of this document. Appreciation is expressed first to our wonderful colleagues at the State Education Department for all of their efforts in overseeing the UPK program and for their support of our work. Cindy Gallagher, Team Leader of the Early Childhood Coordination Team, provided helpful feedback and direction on the survey questions, a letter of support for the study, and many insights about the workings of UPK throughout the state. Susan Megna, Ruth Singer, and Dee Dwyer, Early Childhood Associates, provided assistance in developing survey questions, facilitating access to district plans and final reports, and answering our many questions about UPK programming and financing. Thank you also to Shelia Evans-Tranumn, Associate Commissioner, for her tremendous support of UPK and our research.

In New York City, the dedication and commitment of our partners at Bank Street College who gathered survey information from the school districts in the City and assisted with interpretations of the findings are gratefully acknowledged. Many, many thanks to María Beneján, Director of the Center for UPK at Bank Street College, Sally Imbimbo, Research Specialist and Staff Developer, Fran Schwartz, Senior Researcher, and Eileen Wasow, former Associate Dean for Continuing Education, for their willingness to collaborate with us on this project, their efforts in collecting the data, and for sharing their in-depth knowledge about UPK with us. Thank you also to Dr. Henry Solomon of the Office of School Planning and Accountability at the New York City Board of Education for helping us get the necessary approval to conduct the study in the City.

In addition, we greatly appreciate the assistance provided to us by Eleanor Greig Ukoli, Director of Early Childhood Programs, and Laurel Fraser, Early Childhood Administrator, with the New York City Board of Education, in reviewing our survey, making suggestions to adapt the survey for use in New York City, supporting our efforts, and always being accessible to answer our questions about UPK. Their hard work in creating and maintaining a quality program that serves so many children at so many sites throughout the City deserves special recognition.

We could not have completed this project without the assistance of a first-rate student and administrative team, the members of which helped with the development of the survey, collection of data, follow-up calls and correspondence, countless hours of data entry, preparation of charts and graphs, and helping in so many other tasks. Many thanks to team members—Sarah Lane, Kimberly Kopko, Monica Arroyo, Veronique Bowen, Elizabeth Boxer, Samareh Ghorbani, Emma Heitzman, Umaimah Mendhro, Naomi Solomon, Susan

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We are thankful for our Cornell Early Childhood Program faculty colleagues Judy Ross-Bernstein and Elizabeth Stilwell for their suggestions on the survey questions and interpretation of data. In addition, we greatly appreciate their ongoing support for UPK, their valuable contributions to the work of the Cornell Early Childhood Program, and their endless efforts in improving early care and education for children and families. Thanks to former colleague Dr. Susan Hicks for helping to get this research off the ground and out to those passionate about the well-being of young children.

We are fortunate to have several Ithaca-based colleagues in the Ithaca City School District willing to share their time and expertise with us. Denise Gomber, Director of Early Childhood Programs, and Diana Levy, Program Leader, provided many helpful suggestions on survey drafts, as well as ongoing support for our work. Their commitment to UPK, to preschool teachers, and to classroom quality is greatly admired.

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Finally, we are thankful for the generosity of our funders, whose commitment to UPK and quality preschool programming made this study and report possible. Appreciation is expressed to an anonymous donor for support of this survey-based research effort. Dr. Ruby Takanishi and Fasaha Traylor of the Foundation for Child Development and Luba Lynch of the A. L. Mailman Family Foundation have also been supportive of our overall effort to better understand the implementation of UPK.

Executive Summary

Collaborating for Kids: New York State Universal Prekindergarten 1999-2000 examines the "Wave One" school districts in New York State as they expanded into the second year of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK). Through surveys to district UPK coordinators and analysis of final reports submitted to the State Education Department, much has been learned about the implementation, programming, and practices of the districts that began UPK in 1998-1999, the first program year of UPK, and continued into the 1999-2000 year. This report presents findings in a number of key areas and provides recommendations to both district planners and state officials regarding ways to further enhance community planning and program delivery. The research is part of a larger, comprehensive study currently underway that includes surveys to district UPK coordinators over a three-year period of time, extensive interviews in four case study districts, and surveys and interviews with child care resource and referral agencies across the State.

Clustered under six key policy dimensions, twelve basic principles guided the development of the UPK survey and presentation of its findings:

Universal Access

1. The universal prekindergarten programs developed by districts serve all eligible children in the district rather than target children with particular developmental characteristics or family backgrounds.

Diversity

2. District universal prekindergarten programs accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families within their districts; meet the needs of children with disabilities; and help children learn about, respect, and appreciate the differences among them.

Collaboration

3. District universal prekindergarten programs strengthen and expand existing early care and education networks and programs.

4. District universal prekindergarten programs work with other local agencies in a coordinated effort to make support services available to children and their families.

5. Districts make substantial efforts to build partnerships between families and local universal prekindergarten programs.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

6. The educational services provided by universal prekindergarten programs are developmentally appropriate for the children served by those programs.

7. District universal prekindergarten programs include activities that promote early literacy in their curriculum.

8. Assessments of participating children use developmentally and culturally appropriate methods, measuring change and progress of individual children rather than making comparisons among those in the group.

9. Universal Prekindergarten staff work with teachers in the early primary grades to ensure that the developmentally appropriate experiences children have in prekindergarten are carried forward into kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Teacher Preparation

10. The teachers working with children in universal prekindergarten programs understand how preschool children develop and learn, and they have experience working in preschool settings.

Financing

11. Universal Prekindergarten funds are combined with other sources of revenue to make early care and education services more affordable to families in need of full-day, full-year services by reducing the amount that parents must pay for those services.

12. A portion of Universal Prekindergarten funding is used specifically for program quality enhancement through teacher compensation, staff development, improvements in classroom environments, and family involvement efforts.

Key Provisions of the Universal Prekindergarten Legislation

The statute that established the UPK program and corresponding regulations consist of the following key provisions:[2]

- Prekindergarten classes for all New York State four-year-olds for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day.
- Phase-in of the program with all four-year-olds being served by the year 2001-2002.
- Educational programming that promotes English literacy; meets the social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, cultural, and physical needs of children; meets the needs of families; integrates preschool children with disabilities; and provides continuity with the early elementary grades.
- Attention to support services, parent involvement, assessment, and staff development.
- Community collaboration, or contracting out, of at least 10% of UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings, such as providers of child care and early education, early childhood programs, Head Start, and other community-based agencies, for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children.

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[2] Section 3602-e of Education Law and Section 151-1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner

- ☐ Required teacher certification by the year 2001-2002 for eligibility to teach in a UPK classroom.
- ☐ Policy-making authority vested in local planning groups and school boards to choose whether to implement a UPK program, and if so, to develop their own separate plans for the delivery of services.
- ☐ Options of half-, full-, or extended-day services.
- ☐ Families retain the choice of whether or not to enroll their children in UPK programs.
- ☐ Until full implementation in 2002, the eligibility of a selected number of districts to participate each year as determined by the formula established in Statute. This is based primarily on economic need.
- ☐ State funding for the 1999-2000 school year at a minimum of $2,700 and a maximum of $4,000 per child.
- ☐ For the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 years, a provision that districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged.[3]

Key Findings and Recommendations

Findings and recommendations for enhancing the Universal Prekindergarten Program are highlighted under six main topics.

Universal Access and Diversity

Although it is intended eventually to be a program available to all four-year-olds in the state, in its second year of operation UPK primarily served children from lower income families. The percent of children considered to be economically disadvantaged averaged 64% in upstate districts and 83% in New York City districts. This exceeded the proportion required by the new regulation that required districts to give priority to children from low-income families. Data on race and ethnicity from upstate school districts indicated a mix of European American, African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and Native American children, with much greater diversity in the large urban than in the less urban areas. Although these data were not available for the New York City districts, the mix of racial and ethnic groups is much greater in New York City than in upstate New York.

An average of 11% of the upstate and 3% of the New York City UPK children had identified disabilities. Districts reported having a range of services available to serve children with disabilities and with limited English proficiency (English Language Learners). Districts also gave attention to the needs of working families in planning their UPK programs. Between 40% and 50% of the classrooms provided an extended day option, making child care services available prior to and/or after the UPK experience. However, this pattern varied by location of the classroom (school, community, or Head Start site), with community and Head Start sites much more likely to offer this option than the school-based programs.

- ☆ *Recommendation 1:* Greater emphasis should be given to serving families across the *full range* of socioeconomic levels and family types.
- ☆ *Recommendation 2:* School districts are strongly encouraged to gather information from parents of three-year-olds about anticipated needs for full-day care and design programming to meet those needs.

...in its second year of operation UPK primarily served children from lower income families.

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[3] The criterion used is the district's free and reduced lunch ratio; that is, the proportion of children served by UPK who are economically disadvantaged should be equal or greater than the district's free and reduced lunch ratio.

Approximately 50% of the upstate children and 60% of New York City children in the Year One districts received UPK services in a total of 1200 community-based classrooms.

Collaborations among School Districts, Community-Based Programs, and Families

At the heart of Universal Prekindergarten in New York are educational collaborations among school districts and hundreds of community-based programs. Most school districts upstate and all of those in New York City sought a balance of school-based and community-based classrooms or leaned more heavily in the direction of community sites. Approximately 50% of the upstate children and 60% of New York City children in the Year One districts received UPK services in a total of 1200 community-based classrooms. These sites were most likely to be child care centers, but also included Head Start programs, nursery schools, private schools, and preschool special education settings. Districts reported quality of programming, availability of certified teachers, space, cost of providing services, location, and availability of wrap-around care as important considerations in site selection.

School district investment in staff development reflected this collaborative approach. Almost all of the New York City districts surveyed and three-fourths of those upstate reported that staff development activities were held jointly for school district and community-based teachers and program directors. This represents a major investment by school districts in the quality of the early care and education systems in their communities.

Collaborations extended beyond UPK classrooms, radiating out into the surrounding community at large. When asked about the use of community resources, UPK respondents indicated especially heavy involvement with their public libraries, as well as field trips to museums, parks, and other community sites. Trips of this sort would not be available to most of these community-based classrooms in the absence of UPK funding.

In the majority of school districts, community advisory boards continued to operate during the second year of UPK implementation. Key roles played by these advisors during Year Two included program evaluation and review, planning activities, program improvement, selection of students and sites, monitoring, developing parent involvement activities, and funding discussions.

Efforts to support families took a variety of forms. Most districts reported that parental preference or geographic proximity to the child's home or the parent's workplace was a major factor in determining in which UPK classroom the child would be placed. Over 60% of participating school districts statewide made home visits to families, and 17 of the 18 surveyed districts in New York City provided a social worker or family worker to those in need of such support. Regular interaction with parents was conventional, taking the form of parent-teacher conferences, field trips, and family-focused events, in addition to the home visits.

- ☆ *Recommendation 3:* School districts making considerable use of community-based early care and education programs should be compared with those districts that have elected to keep most of their programs school based. This comparison would provide an understanding of how the decision to invest or not invest in community-based organizations affects the quality and economic viability of those programs.
- ☆ *Recommendation 4:* Examples of good practice should be gathered from UPK school districts in all of the key areas of program implementation and disseminated throughout New York State. These can include financing strategies, joint staff development approaches, child recruit-

ment methods, accountability techniques, developmentally appropriate teaching strategies, collaborations with community-based organizations, assessment efforts, and articulation of higher education teacher preparation programs.

> *Critical to the success of the UPK experience are the skills of the teaching staff and the nature of teacher-child relationships.*

Classroom Practices

Although the survey did not probe deeply into the curricular approaches being used by UPK teachers across the state, there is some evidence that the general orientation of the reporting school districts has been developmentally appropriate for four-year-olds. Coordinators reported that observational techniques, anecdotal records, and developmental checklists or profiles were the preferred approaches of assessing the educational progress of the children in their UPK classrooms. This suggests that school districts and teachers have been emphasizing the importance of documenting developmental changes in individual children over time rather than comparing children with group norms. Over 70% of the upstate and 60% of the New York City districts planned additional follow-up with the UPK children in the primary grades.

A large proportion of districts gave attention to activities that help facilitate the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten. Those most frequently mentioned included information sharing and program visitation.

☆ *Recommendation 5:* Classroom-level information regarding the extent to which UPK teachers believe in and are using developmentally appropriate, child-centered models of preschool education in their work with UPK children should be collected and included in annual reports to the State.

☆ *Recommendation 6:* School districts should invest in comprehensive child assessment strategies that monitor children's physical well-being, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, cognition, and general knowledge on multiple occasions across a wide variety of classroom activities.[4]

☆ *Recommendation 7:* Efforts to mobilize prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers together in developing and implementing ways to smooth and enhance the transition from prekindergarten into the kindergarten classroom should be expanded.

Teacher Preparation and Support

Critical to the success of the UPK experience are the skills of the teaching staff and the nature of teacher-child relationships. Final report data showed that 75% of the New York City classrooms and 91% of the upstate classrooms had state-certified teachers. School-based sites were more likely to have certified teachers than those in other community organizations, however, especially in New York City.

The UPK teacher corps is relatively inexperienced. Over 60% of upstate districts reported that their teachers in both school-based and community settings averaged less than five years of teaching experience in pre-K classrooms. In New York City, over 40% of the districts surveyed reported this to be the case for school-based teachers; a full 100% reported this for their UPK teachers in community-based sites. In some districts, certified teachers who had been working with older children transferred into UPK teaching positions when those opportunities became available.

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[4] As specified by the Goal One Technical Planning Group of the National Education Goals Panel, in S. L. Kagan, E. Moore, and S. Bredekamp. *Reconsidering Children's Early Development and Learning: Toward Common Views and Vocabulary.* (Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel, 1995).

The quality of the UPK experience...rests with relatively inexperienced teachers, many of whom are poorly paid...

The quality of the UPK experience, and its ultimate success in preparing children for kindergarten, rests with relatively inexperienced teachers, many of whom are poorly paid and some of whom are under heavy pressure to become state-certified. In this context, staff development becomes a vital investment for child development and the preparation of preschool children for primary school. As mentioned earlier, most school districts have been conducting staff development jointly, bringing school district and community-based teachers together for training. Also, district staff development specialists are providing assistance in many of the surveyed school districts. Staff development efforts are most commonly focused on early literacy, curriculum development, developmentally appropriate practices, and assessment of child progress. In New York City, particular attention is also being paid to the transition from prekindergarten into the primary school, set-up of the classroom environment, and classroom management.

- ☆ *Recommendation 8:* All staff development activities sponsored by each school district should be made available to all of the UPK teachers in the district regardless of the type of site in which they teach.
- ☆ *Recommendation 9:* Family involvement strategies should be addressed more fully and systematically in the staff development efforts of school districts and implemented with greater intensity.
- ☆ *Recommendation 10:* School district UPK staff should work with other stakeholders in early care and education (e.g., higher education, child care councils, teachers, site directors) to make the pathways to teacher certification clearer and the certificate more achievable.

Financing

The districts did not report difficulty in finding adequate numbers of qualified teachers and staff for their UPK programs. However, many may have focused on filling positions in school-based settings where salaries tend to be relatively high. Other data on barriers to UPK site selection suggests that lack of certified teachers in some of the community-based sites is inhibiting expansion of UPK services into those locales.

Approximately 85% of upstate districts reported their school-based teachers earned over $30,000 per year. This was reversed for community-based teachers, in which 85% of districts reported these teachers to be earning less than $30,000 per year. A similar pattern was noted for New York City. The disparity in salaries suggests that certified community-based teachers are likely to leave for school-based jobs when the opportunity arises. Low salaries also mean that some teachers will leave teaching for higher-paying professions.

Two-thirds of the upstate districts and 50% of the New York City districts reported that they used funding from sources other than UPK for their UPK program. Most frequently mentioned were local tax revenues, Title I funding, and other state grants. Districts were also asked if revenues per child in their community-based programs had increased as a result of being involved in Universal prekindergarten. About 20% of upstate and 30% of New York City districts indicated that revenues had increased. However, over 50% mentioned that they did not know, suggesting that districts need to give more attention to how community-based early care and education programs are financed in their local communities.

- ☆ *Recommendation 11:* School districts are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to discrepancies in teacher salaries between school-based and community-based UPK programs and seek ways to bolster the salaries of UPK teachers in community-based programs.
- ☆ *Recommendation 12:* A study should be conducted to determine the extent to which the implementation of UPK quality enhancement approaches such as classroom-level teacher preparation strategies (observation, direct consultation), mentorship programs, classroom equipment start-up grants, home visiting, hiring family workers, and increases in teacher salaries are associated with higher levels of funding per child received by a school district. If this relationship is documented, then the state should consider an increase in the minimum amount per child awarded school districts for the delivery of UPK services in order to make quality enhancement investments possible for all participating school districts.
- ☆ *Recommendation 13:* School districts are encouraged to enter into multi-year contracts with those community-based preschool programs that have demonstrated the ability to offer prekindergarten services that meet the standard set by the school district.
- ☆ *Recommendation 14:* The state is encouraged to amend transportation aid to allow for reimbursement of the transportation of four-year-olds, consistent with existing school-age reimbursement policies and procedures.

[Respondents] cited support from their district boards of education, working relationships that they have developed with community-based providers, success at meeting the needs of children, and overall community support for UPK.

Program Successes and Challenges

When asked what aspects of the UPK program have been especially successful, the UPK coordinators and directors responding to the survey cited support from their district boards of education, working relationships that they have developed with community-based providers, success at meeting the needs of children, and overall community support for UPK. Specific strong points examining direct impacts on four-year-olds involved success at fostering enthusiasm for learning, developing social skills, promoting self-help skills, and building pre-academic skills—all areas central to success in kindergarten. Respondents identified inadequate funding levels, shortages of available classroom sites, fund distribution procedures, and lack of transportation for four-year-olds as ongoing challenges to full implementation of the UPK program in New York State.

Future Research Efforts

This research is part of a larger study that includes intensive interviews in four case study districts, surveys and interviews with child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state, and additional surveys with districts in years three and four of UPK. Of critical interest is what districts are doing to carry out their UPK programs, why and how districts have come to develop the programs as they have, and the impacts of UPK on the overall early care and education system.

Respondents identified inadequate funding levels, shortages of available classroom sites, fund distribution procedures, and lack of transportation...

Introduction

The New York Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program was developed in response to a number of challenges and opportunities recognized during the decade of the 1990s. In 1991, estimates indicated that at least one-third of New York State's five-year-olds were not ready to learn upon entry into school.[5] Welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 raised additional issues regarding the education and care of young children when their parents returned to work. At the same time, a substantial body of research has demonstrated the long-term benefits of early education to children, such as more positive learning experiences in kindergarten and the early grades and a decreased need for more expensive special educational services due to learning difficulties.

In August 1997, a budget compromise was reached that included major expansion of prekindergarten services for all four-year-old children throughout the state. UPK was contained in a larger proposal that included funding for all-day kindergarten, reduced class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, professional development, technology improvements, and bonding authority for building improvements.

Key Provisions of the Universal Prekindergarten Legislation

The statute that established the UPK program and corresponding regulations consist of the following key provisions: [6]

- Prekindergarten classes for all New York State four-year-olds for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day
- Phase-in of the program with all four-year olds being served by the year 2001-2002. Projected funding amounts are as follows:
  $62 million in 1998-1999 (actual amount)
  $100 million in 1999-2000 (actual amount)
  $225 million in 2000-2001
  $500 million in 2001-2002
- Educational programming that promotes English literacy; meets the social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, cultural, and physical needs of children; meets the needs of families; integrates preschool children with disabilities; and provides continuity with the early elementary grades
- Attention to support services, parent involvement, assessment, and staff development
- Community collaboration, or contracting out, of at least 10% of UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings, such as provid-

[5] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1991, as reported in the *Steps to Universal Prekindergarten Guidebook* (Albany: State Communities Aid Association, 1998), p. 1.

[6] Chapter 436 of the New York State Laws of 1997 contains the UPK legislation.

ers of child care and early education, early childhood programs, Head Start, and other community-based agencies, for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children

- Required teacher certification by the year 2001-2002 for eligibility to teach in a UPK classroom
- Policy-making authority vested in local planning groups and school boards to choose whether to implement a UPK program, and if so, to develop their own separate plans for the delivery of services
- Options of half-, full-, or extended-day services
- Families retain the choice of whether or not to enroll their children in UPK programs
- Until full implementation in 2002, the eligibility of a selected number of districts to participate each year as determined by the formula established in Statute. This is based primarily on economic need. An increasing proportion of children will be funded for UPK services during each year of a district's participation until all eligible children whose parents wish for them to participate are being served
- State funding for the 1999-2000 school year at a minimum of $2,700 and a maximum of $4,000 per child
- For the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 years, a provision that districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged. The criterion used is the district's free and reduced lunch ratio. The proportion of children served by UPK who are economically disadvantaged should be equal to or greater than the district's free and reduced lunch ratio.

In the first two years of programming, UPK has served over 45,000 children in 130 school districts across the state at a cost of approximately $162 million.

Scope of the Program

In the first two years of programming, UPK has served over 45,000 children in 130 school districts across the state at a cost of approximately $162 million. Allocations for Year Three include $225 million to serve an additional 46,000 children in a total of 193 districts.

1998-1999 (Year 1)	1999-2000 (Year 2)	2000-2001 (Year 3)
$62 million spent	$100 million spent	$225 allocated
18,300 children served	27,460 children served	46,567 children served
96 districts participating [7]	130 districts participating	193 districts participating

Purpose of the Study

The Cornell Early Childhood Program received foundation funding to study the implementation of UPK over a three-year period, beginning in January 2000. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the implementation efforts of the first-year ("Wave One") districts during their second year of UPK programming. All districts that began UPK in the 1998-1999 year and that continued to participate in UPK during the 1999-2000 year were invited to participate in the study.[8] Attention was given to those practices in a number of core component areas essential to meet the requirements of the law and regulations, and to provide high quality educational services to

[7] In this report, the 32 community school districts in New York City are counted individually. This differs from many State reports that show New York City as a single school district.

[8] All but two of the Wave One districts continued into the second year of UPK.

children and families. This information will be used to provide insight into the structure of UPK programs; the variety of instructional, assessment, and staff development methods that districts use; and the challenges districts face as the program expands to serve an increasing number of children.

This research is part of a larger study that includes intensive interviews in four case study districts, surveys and interviews with child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state, and additional surveys with districts in years three and four of UPK. Of critical interest is what districts are doing to carry out their UPK programs, why and how districts have come to develop the programs as they have, and the impacts of UPK on the overall early care and education system. This document serves as a follow-up to *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*, which highlighted district UPK plans and noteworthy practices in early childhood education.

CHAPTER TWO

Guiding Principles

Universal Access
Child selection process
Children served by UPK
All-day programs for families

Diversity
Integration of children with disabilities
Services to children with limited English proficiency

Financing
Teacher salaries
Funding for UPK
Revenues of community-based programs

Collaboration
School-community
Family

Teacher Preparation
Staff development
Teacher certification
Experience in pre-K classrooms

Developmentally Appropriate Practice
Curriculum
Child assessment
Transitions/continuity

Twelve basic principles guided the development of the survey and presentation of its findings. These principles were derived from the program requirements specified in the new subsection of the Education Law addressing Universal Prekindergarten (UPK),[9] the regulations developed to implement the law, and current knowledge of the care and education of young children. The principles are organized under six major dimensions: Universal Access, Diversity, Collaboration, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Teacher Preparation, and Financing. These provide the structure for the presentation of findings that follow.

Universal Access

1. The universal prekindergarten programs developed by districts serve all eligible children in the district rather than target children with particular developmental characteristics or family backgrounds.

The clear intent of the state law authorizing this program is that it be available to *all* children whose families wish their children to attend, rather than it give priority to children from low-income families or children deemed at risk for other reasons.[10] The statewide UPK program is funded with state and local tax revenues provided by all the taxpayers in the state and school district. District programs are made available to the broadest possible spectrum of district families.

Diversity

2. District universal prekindergarten programs accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families within their districts; meet the needs of children with disabilities; and help children learn about, respect, and appreciate the differences among them.

The Universal Prekindergarten regulations emphasize the importance of designing programs that meet the needs of children from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as those children with disabilities or other special needs. Teachers can design classroom environments and activities in ways that help children learn to understand, respect, and appreciate the differences that exist among them.[11]

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[9] Sub-part 151-1 of NYS Education Law.

[10] An amendment to the UPK statute requires districts to give preference to children who are economically disadvantaged in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years.

[11] L. Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, *Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989).

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A key component of the legislation is the requirement that districts contract out at least 10% of their UPK funds...

Collaboration

3. District universal prekindergarten programs strengthen and expand existing early care and education networks and programs.

A key component of the legislation is the requirement that districts contract out at least 10% of their UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children. To help facilitate such collaboration, regulations required districts to establish an advisory board to assess the need for a UPK program and to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding program design prior to implementation. Appointed by the Superintendent, the committee needed to include Board of Education members, teachers, parents of children who attend district schools, community leaders, and child care and early education providers. In addition to these requirements, New York City committees needed to include members of the community school board and the community school district superintendent or superintendent's designee.

Through this set-aside requirement, stronger linkages can be formed between local schools and the providers of child care and early education, early childhood programs, Head Start, and other community agencies. Opportunities exist for active participation in the UPK planning process, as well as through the provision of direct services to children and their families.

4. District universal prekindergarten programs work with other local agencies in a coordinated effort to make support services available to children and their families.

The UPK regulations specify that local programs should coordinate support services for families so that children are able to meet UPK goals. Over the years, for example, Head Start has demonstrated the value of making sure that children have the health and dental care, nutritional support, housing, clothing, and family stability that allow them to benefit from the educational services provided by the program.

5. Districts make substantial efforts to build partnerships between families and local universal prekindergarten programs.

The new law specifies that programs shall provide for strong parental partnerships, participation, and involvement in UPK programs. A substantial amount of research now documents the long-term benefits for children accruing from active family involvement with their early care and education. A strong family involvement tradition has been established through the existing Experimental Prekindergarten Program.[12] The UPK regulations specify that family involvement should be fostered in the language that families understand best.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

6. The educational services provided by universal prekindergarten programs are developmentally appropriate for the children served by those programs.

Developmentally appropriate practice with young children involves a clear understanding of the age, interests, strengths, and needs of the children being served.[13] Through careful room arrangement and curriculum planning, teachers are able to capitalize on the interests of young children and build these into learning experiences across a wide range of skills and activities. Thus, the role of the teacher is to organize the environment to stimulate and support children's play-based learning, to interact with the children in meaningful ways, and to help children plan, carry out, and reflect on their learning experience.[14]

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[12] Experimental Prekindergarten is a state-funded program serving children from low-income families since 1966.

[13] For a thorough overview see S. Bredecamp and C. Copple, Eds., *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Revised Edition* (Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997).

7. District universal prekindergarten programs include activities that promote early literacy in their curriculum.

The law emphasizes the importance of programming that promotes early literacy skills for young children. This allows for a range of activities in an English literacy environment, collaborative efforts between the school and home, and opportunities for reading and writing.

8. Assessments of participating children use developmentally and culturally appropriate methods, measuring change and progress of individual children rather than making comparisons among those in the group.

The state regulations governing the universal prekindergarten program specify that an assessment process be used to determine the developmental baseline and progress of each child. This principle underscores the importance of recognizing that preschool children develop at different rates and that meaning is found from monitoring the progress of each child through comparison with the same child at an earlier time point rather than with other children. It is also important to use assessment methods that draw on child competencies and skills demonstrated over time and in ways that are natural and culturally appropriate.[15]

9. Universal Prekindergarten staff work with teachers in the early primary grades to ensure that the developmentally appropriate experiences children have in prekindergarten are carried forward into kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

The new law specifies that universal prekindergarten programs ensure "continuity...with instruction in the early primary grades." Efforts through curriculum planning, child and family activities, assessment, and communication among UPK, kindergarten, and elementary teachers can assist children in making a successful transition to kindergarten and the early grades. A successful transition would include involving and preparing parents and children for the upcoming change.

Teacher Preparation

10. The teachers working with children in universal prekindergarten programs understand how preschool children develop and learn, and they have experience working in preschool settings.

This principle reflects the understanding that preschool children learn differently from older children. Currently in New York State, a teacher can be certified to work with prekindergarten children but have taught only at the elementary school level. If school districts assign teachers without education and experience in working with preschool children, it is essential that those teachers be prepared for such assignments through further training and apprenticeship experiences.

The new law specifies that universal prekindergarten programs ensure "continuity...with instruction in the early primary grades."

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[14] *Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy in the Early Years* (Albany: New York State Department of Education, 1998), p. 5.

[15] See S. J. Meisels, J. Jablon, D. B. Marsden, M. L. Dichtelmiller, and A. Dorfman, *The Work Sampling System* (Ann Arbor, MI: Rebus Inc., 1994).

Financing

Affordability of early education services is an ongoing challenge for parents with young children...

11. Universal Prekindergarten funds are combined with other sources of revenue to make early care and education services more affordable to families in need of full-day, full-year care by reducing the amount that parents must pay for those services.

Affordability of early education services is an ongoing challenge for parents with young children in New York and elsewhere across the country. One intention of the New York State legislature in passing UPK legislation was to create prekindergarten programs that would be available to families at little or no cost. Programs that blend funding sources (e.g., UPK funds, child care subsidies, parent fees) in order to provide full-day, full-year programs for families should be able to deliver those programs at less cost to parents when UPK funding is included in the financing mix.

12. A portion of Universal Prekindergarten funding is used specifically for program quality enhancement through teacher compensation, staff development, improvements in classroom environments, and family involvement efforts.

Good quality full-day, full-year child care costs more than most parents can afford to purchase through parent fees.[16] The UPK program requires that state-certified teachers provide services. In order to retain these teachers, their salaries must be high enough to encourage them to remain in the teaching profession. UPK teachers also need ongoing professional development training. The UPK program requires family involvement and family access to comprehensive services, which impose added costs on participating programs. The added costs of these quality investments must be financed by the universal prekindergarten program; parents cannot afford to pay higher fees for full-day, full-year child care, and participating child care centers have no other sources of funding to cover these added costs.

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[16] D. Gomby, N. Krantzler, M. Larner, C. Stevenson, and R. Behrman, "Financing Child Care: Analysis and Recommendations," *The Future of Children, 6, no. 2* (Summer/Fall 1996), pp. 5-25.

Data Collection & Analysis

A survey was developed to examine the implementation, programming, and practices of the Wave One districts during the second year of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), 1999-2000. In addition, final reports submitted to the State Education Department at the end of the year by each Wave One school district were used to provide additional information regarding classroom sites, children served, and teacher certification.

Wave One Districts

Of the 157 school districts eligible to participate in the UPK program during the first year, 97 applied for funding. These included all 32 districts in New York City and 65 districts in other regions of the state. Sixty-four of the upstate districts and all districts in New York City implemented the program in 1998-1999.

During the 1999-2000 year, all 32 of the New York City districts and 62 of the 64 upstate districts continued their participation in UPK. Districts submitted detailed program plans to the State Education Department for approval. These plans specified the activities to be carried out to meet the program objectives and requirements.

The Universal Prekindergarten Survey

In the spring of 2000, a survey was drafted, reviewed by several individuals working closely with UPK programs, and modified based upon their feedback and suggestions. Surveys were sent directly to the UPK coordinators in the 62 upstate districts, and to those in the New York City districts in which administrators gave approval for the coordinator to participate in the study.[17] Research staff sent follow-up letters and made telephone calls to answer questions and increase response rates. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B.

The survey contained a number of sections that reflected the core components of Universal Prekindergarten:

- Children served by Universal Prekindergarten
- UPK sites and classrooms
- Teachers, staff, and staff development
- Curriculum and programming
- Planning and financing

[17] Board of Education procedures in New York City required district superintendent approval before surveys could be sent to the UPK coordinator.

- Community collaboration
- Evaluation of UPK

Coordinators completed surveys in 54 of the 62 upstate districts (87%) and in 18 of the 32 New York City districts (56%). The 54 upstate districts represented approximately 92% of all of the UPK classrooms and children served in the Wave One upstate districts during 1999-2000. The 18 New York City districts represented approximately 48% of all of the UPK classrooms and children served in New York City during this time.

Final Report Data

In addition, data were gathered through final reports submitted to the State Education Department at the end of the school year. These reports included information on:

- Classroom sites
- Provider of services
- Length of program and extended day care
- Number of UPK children served
- Number of economically disadvantaged children served
- Number of UPK children with individualized educational plans (IEPs)
- Certification of classroom teachers

All of the participating districts submitted these reports (62 upstate, 32 New York City). UPK children attended a total of approximately 450 classrooms upstate and 1500 in New York City during 1999-2000.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the programming and practices used by Wave One districts during the second year of Universal Prekindergarten. The chapters that follow present findings for each of the core component areas. In this report, upstate and New York City data have been analyzed and presented separately. Survey data provide information on trends and patterns across responding districts, while the final report data allow for findings across all districts and specific classrooms. Percentages and averages are reported for the various research topics.

It is important to keep in mind that each set of survey findings is based on the number or percentage of *responding Wave One districts*. Eighty-seven percent of upstate districts and 56% for New York City districts responded to the survey, reflecting 92% of the UPK children and classrooms in the upstate districts and 48% in New York City districts. Thus, the findings represent only these districts, and should not be interpreted as representing *all* Wave One districts or all UPK districts (both Wave One and Wave Two). However, findings from the final reports include all districts, both that responded to the survey and those that did not. It will be noted whether the findings are from the surveys or final reports.

Findings: Universal Access & Diversity

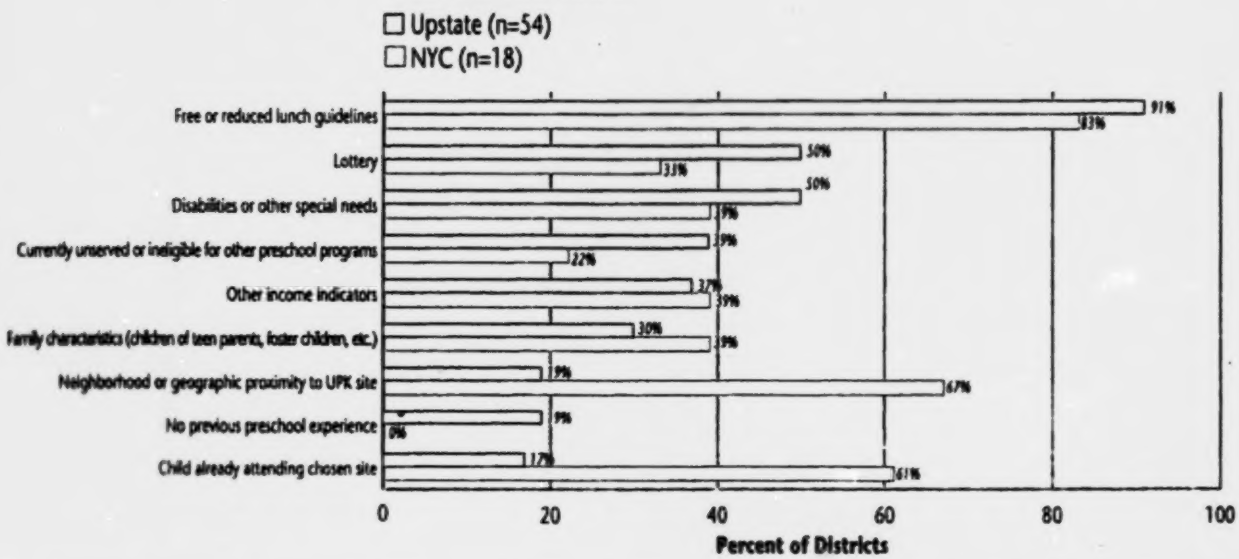
Universal access is a key component related to how districts are working to ensure that they provide services for all children within their district. This section addresses the question of access by examining the criteria used for selecting children for Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), changes in selection criteria from Year One to Year Two, characteristics of the children served, services to children with disabilities and limited English proficiency, and the extent to which all-day programs are available to families.

...districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged.

Selecting Children for Universal Prekindergarten

Survey questions inquired about the criteria districts used to select children for their UPK programs. A new state requirement in 1999-2000 specified that districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged. Districts were required to make efforts to enroll the same or greater proportion of economically disadvantaged children as their free and reduced lunch program ratios (FRLP). For example, if a district's FRLP is .50, then at least 50% of the UPK children should be economically disadvantaged. The remaining slots could be selected in a manner left to the discretion of the districts. A district could choose to serve an additional proportion of economically disadvantaged children, emphasize some other child characteristics, or open the program up to all children.

Child Selection Criteria



The majority of districts utilized one or more selection criteria. As the graph shows, almost all upstate and New York City districts used free or reduced lunch guidelines, and those that did not chose other income indicators. Half of the upstate districts used lotteries, and half also gave preference to children with disabilities. Almost 40% of upstate districts selected children who were currently unserved by any preschool program or ineligible for other preschool programs. New York City districts reported a greater emphasis on geographic proximity and the child already attending the site as selection factors. About one-third used lotteries, and about 40% indicated disabilities or other special needs and family characteristics. Criteria used less frequently by districts included no previous preschool experience, the ratio of adults to children in the classroom, targeting specific elementary school zones, reaching children with limited English proficiency, and Pre-K screening/assessment results. Two districts indicated that they tried to accommodate all children that applied.

With limited funding and the implementation process still in the early stages, districts often chose specific groups of children for the available UPK slots. Because UPK is only in its second year, it is not surprising that districts targeted specific children, particularly those considered most in need of services.

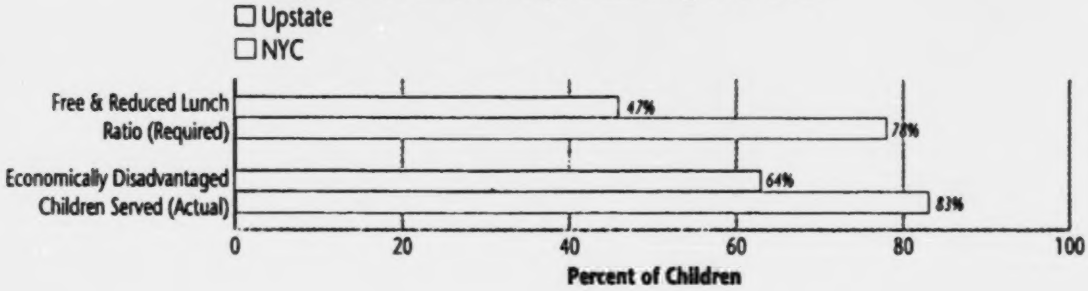
Changes in Selection Criteria from Year 1 to Year 2

Approximately 25% of the upstate districts and 17% of the New York City districts reported that their selection criteria had changed from the 1998-1999 to the 1999-2000 school years. Almost all of these mentioned a greater reliance on income guidelines and a greater focus on serving children from lower-income families. These changes reflected the new State requirement to focus on children who are economically disadvantaged. Districts that did not change their selection criteria may have already been serving this population since many districts emphasized low income or special needs criteria in Year One.

Children Served by Universal Prekindergarten

Final report data for all 62 upstate and 32 New York City districts provided information on the children served by UPK during the 1999-2000 year. The free and reduced lunch program ratio (FRLP) averaged 47% in the upstate districts and 78% in New York City.

Average Percent Economically Disadvantaged Children



The percentage of economically disadvantaged children actually served by UPK was considerably greater than required in most districts, however, particularly in upstate New York. This figure averaged 64% in upstate districts and 83% in New York City.

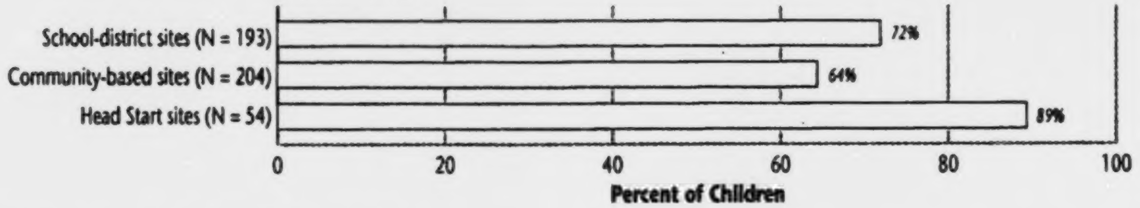
Districts clearly met the state requirement to serve economically disadvantaged children. Where more low-income children were served than required, it is believed the districts felt strongly that these children were in need of the services provided by UPK and took extra steps to include them.

Characteristics of UPK Children by Classroom Type

Further examination of final report data sheds light on the composition of the individual UPK classrooms. Did the proportion of UPK children who were economically disadvantaged differ by type of site (district-based, community-based, Head Start)?

In the upstate districts, variations can be noted. As shown in the chart below, a greater proportion of UPK children in Head Start classrooms were economically disadvantaged (89%) than in district (72%) or community-based (64%) settings. This is likely due to differences in the purposes of the settings. Head Start classrooms, for example, have traditionally served low-income children and are required to have at least 90% of the children in their classrooms be from low-income families.[18] District and community-based sites are more likely to serve a broader range of children and families.[19]

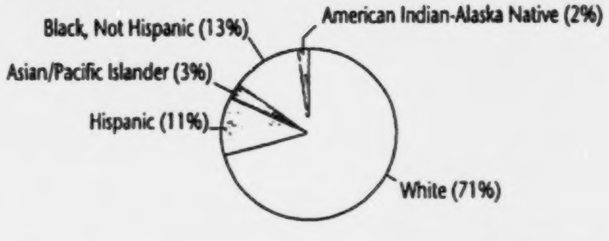
Average Percent Economically Disadvantaged Children in Different Classroom Settings
(Upstate Only)



Race/Ethnicity of Children in UPK Programs

Thirty-eight of the fifty-four upstate districts that responded to the survey provided information on the race/ethnicity of their UPK students. As indicated in the graph below, the children these districts served were on average 71% white, 13% black, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native.[20] However, several districts served large proportions of minority children, particularly in the large upstate metropolitan areas. Data were not available for New York City for this dimension, but would show much greater diversity than is reflected in the figure below due to the more diverse racial and ethnic composition of New York City residents.

Race/Ethnicity of Children in UPK Programs (Average Percent)
Upstate (n=38)



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[19] Data were not available for the New York City districts due to the large number of children served and manner in which data were reported.

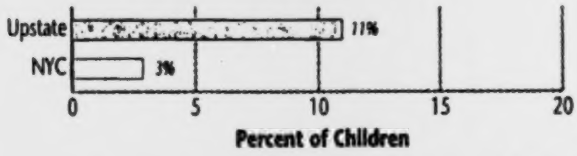
[18] E. Zigler and S. Meunchow, *Head Start: The Inside Story of Americas's Most Successful Educational Experiment* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

[20] These percentages are approximate figures.

Serving Children with Disabilities

Of interest are children with disabilities who are served by Universal Prekindergarten. Final report data for all upstate and New York City districts indicated the percentage of UPK children with an individualized education plan (IEP). For the upstate districts, this proportion averaged 11%. In the New York City districts, it averaged 3%.

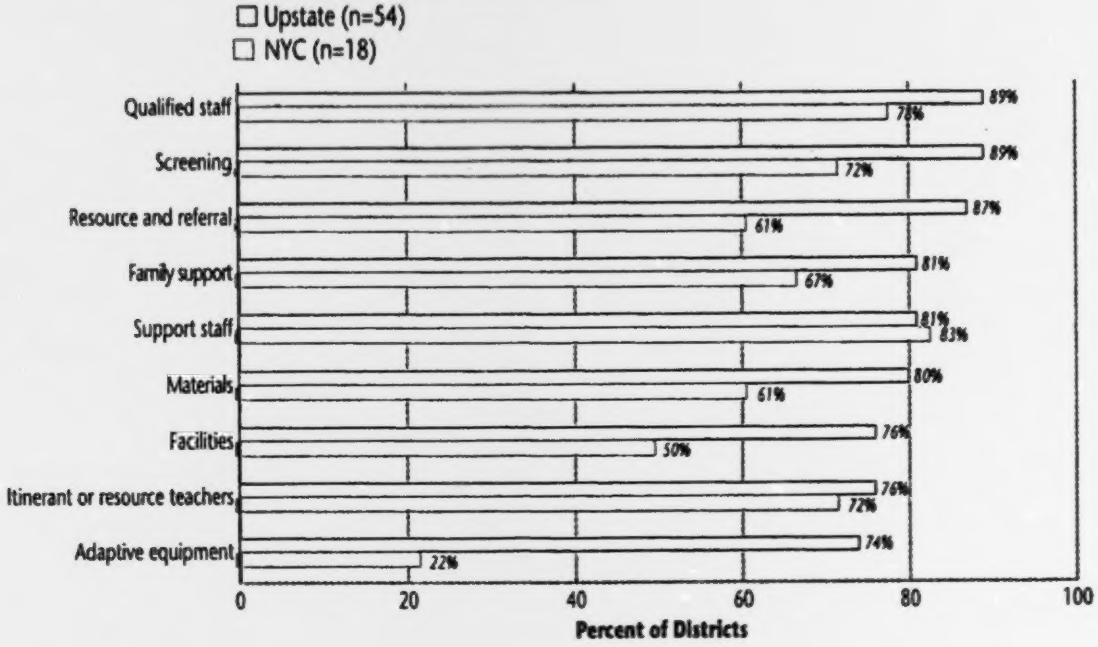
Average Percent of Children with Individualized Education Plan



It appears that districts demonstrated substantial commitment to serving children with special needs. This is further illustrated by the availability of services to meet the needs of these children. Survey responses indicated that a majority of districts had the staff, facilities, and resources to serve children with disabilities. For example, over 80% of upstate districts reported they had qualified staff, screening, resource and referral services, family support, support staff, and materials. Approximately 75% had facilities, itinerant or resource teachers, and adaptive equipment. These figures were somewhat lower for the New York City districts. However, except for adaptive equipment, a substantial majority of New York City districts had specialized resources available.

...districts demonstrated substantial commitment to serving children with special needs.

Services to Children with Disabilities



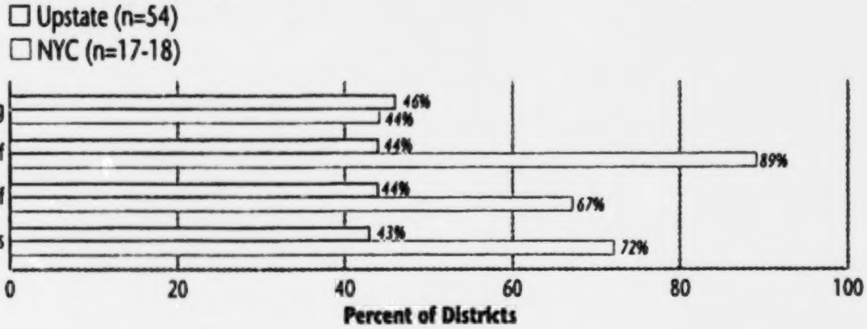
Services to Children with Limited English Proficiency (English Language Learners)

Districts were surveyed about the percentage of UPK children they served with limited English proficiency (English Language Learners). Forty-four of the 54 responding upstate districts provided this information. The percentage of English Language Learners averaged 2%. Data were not available for New York City, but it is expected that the average would be considerably higher than it is upstate, particularly in certain districts throughout the city with large immigrant populations.

Survey data indicated that between 40% and 50% of the upstate districts had screening, qualified staff, support staff, and materials for English Language Learners. In New York City, a much greater percentage of the districts indicated they had staff and materials available. Almost 90% of districts had qualified staff, and approximately 70% had support staff and materials.

It was not surprising to see more services in New York City due to high proportions of English Language Learners there, especially in certain districts. However, districts appear to have a strong interest in meeting the needs of these children throughout the state.

Services to English Language Learners



Availability of All-Day Programs for Families

Final report data were used to examine the extent to which all-day programs were available for families. As shown in the following charts, almost 50% of the upstate classrooms and 40% of the New York City classrooms offered a half- or full-day program with extended day care available.[21] About 40% of the classrooms in upstate districts and 50% of those in New York City districts offered only half-day programs without an extended day option. Only about 10% of the programs ran the length of the school day without any additional services available.

A closer look at the data revealed differences based on whether the program was school-based, community-based, or under the auspice of Head Start. For example, in the upstate districts, 60% of the community-based classrooms and almost 50% of the Head Start classrooms offered an extended day program, combined with either a half-day or full-day program. However, only about 30% of the district-based classrooms did so. Over half of the district-based classrooms offered a half-day program only, whereas this was the case in only about one-third of the community and Head Start classrooms.

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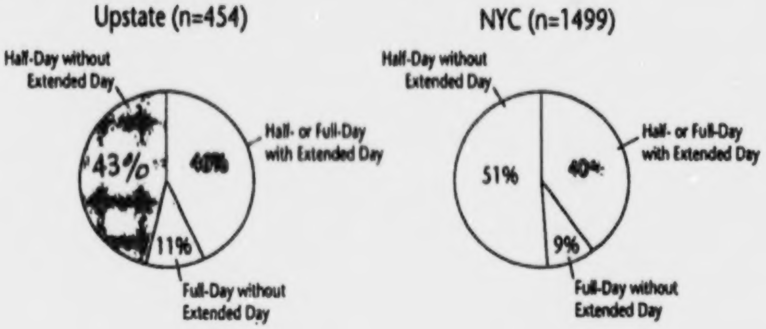
[21] Extended day programs run during the parents' working hours. Full-day programs provide care during the hours that primary school is in session.

Percent of Sites Offering Extended Day Care



This pattern was even more evident in New York City districts. Almost 60% of community-based classrooms and 70% of the Head Start classrooms offered an extended day option, while less than 10% of the district-based classrooms did so. Seventy-five percent of the school-based classrooms were half-day programs only; this was the case in about 40% of community-based and 25% of Head Start classrooms.

Upstate Classrooms (total=454)

	School-based (193)	**Community-based (204)**	**Head Start (56)**
Half-day	52%	38%	32%
Full-day	19%	2%	22%
Extended day	29%	60%	46%

NYC Classrooms (total=1499)

	School-based (557)	**Community-based (826)**	**Head Start (116)**
Half-day	75%	38%	25%
Full-day	18%	3%	4%
Extended day	7%	59%	71%

These findings suggest that heavy emphasis on school-based sites may limit access by families that need all-day care for their children. This is especially important for working families and for those programs that do not offer transportation, such as to another childcare setting, before or after the UPK program.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Findings: Collaboration

Collaboration is a dimension of Universal Prekindergarten that is key to the program's success in strengthening and expanding existing early care and education systems. This study examined two types of collaboration: 1) school-community; and 2) school-family. School-community collaboration refers to the partnerships between school districts and the community-based programs that are providing UPK services. For example, to what extent are districts contracting out to community-based programs? What does this collaboration look like? School-family collaboration consists of ways in which programs include families, the extent to which families are involved in their children's educational program, and services that can improve child and family well-being.

The majority of districts preferred a balance between school and community sites...

School-Community Collaboration

District philosophy about service provision

The survey inquired about district philosophies of where UPK services should be provided. On a 1-5 scale, with 1 = "school-oriented", 3 = "balance of school and community", and 5 = "community-oriented", the upstate average rating (2.81) reflected a balance of school and community sites. The average rating in New York City (3.33) suggested a stronger community-oriented focus.

As shown in the following graph, two-thirds of the upstate and all of the reporting New York City school districts espoused a philosophy of UPK program delivery that supports substantial partnership with community organizations. The majority of districts preferred a balance between school and community sites, with an additional number indicating a greater community focus. However, it is interesting to note that almost one in three of the upstate districts mentioned a strong preference for having services provided primarily by the district, whereas this was never the case in New York City. Both upstate and in the City there were a number of districts with some preference for community-based sites.

Children Served by District and Community Providers

A review of final report data from all districts indicated the percentages of UPK children served by district and community providers. In the upstate districts, the percent of UPK children served by the district averaged 37%, with a range from 0-100%.[22] The percent served by community-based organizations averaged 63%. However, when considering all upstate children together, community providers served 51% and district providers served 49%. This difference between the average and the total number was due to several large school districts placing a substantial proportion of their children in district-based sites. Upstate districts for which budget data were available contracted out an average of 60% of their UPK funds.[23]

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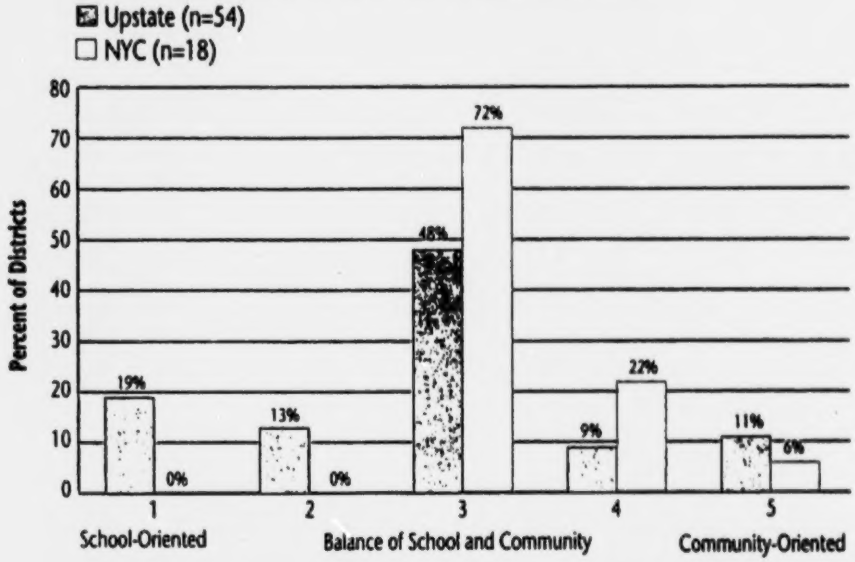
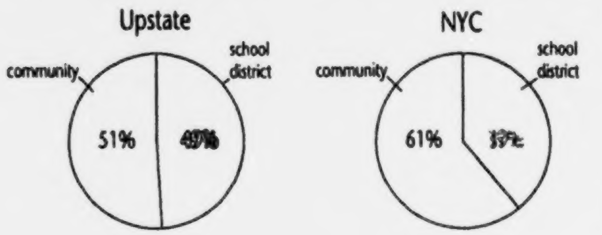
[22] A few districts received waivers from the State Education Department so they did not have to contract out the required 10% of the UPK funds to community-based programs.

[23] Budget data were not available for New York City.



District Philosophies on How Funds Should Be Allocated

In New York City, the percent of children served by the district averaged 42%, with a range from 0 to 86%. The percent served by community-based organizations averaged 58%. Of all the children, community providers served 61% and district providers served 39%. Community providers included day care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, private schools, family/group family providers, preschool special education programs, and other community-based programs.



Percent of Children at School and Community Sites

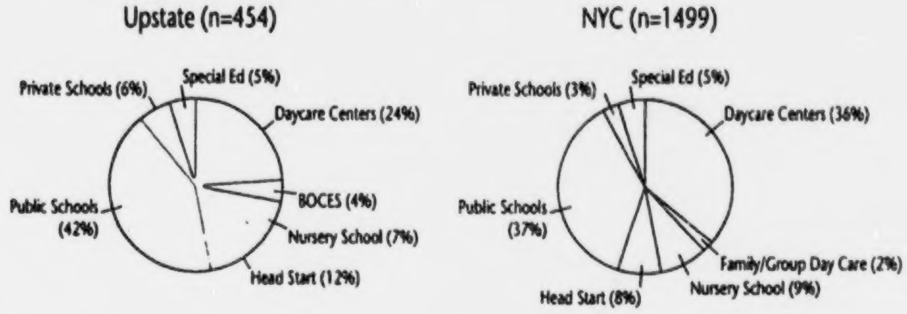
In many districts, both upstate and in New York City, community providers served all or almost all of the UPK children. For example, in 32 of the 62 upstate districts, community providers served 75% or more of the UPK children. This was the case in 11 of the 32 New York City districts.

These findings suggest that school districts have acted upon the philosophies they expressed about involving community-based programs in the delivery of UPK services. The majority of districts surveyed are collaborating well above and beyond what is required by the 10% state requirement. Lack of space may facilitate the need to work with community agencies; however, these figures, along with district philosophies, suggest that districts do believe it is important for services to be provided in a range of settings.

Types of Providers and Classrooms

Final report data provided information on the types of UPK providers and classrooms. For the upstate districts, approximately 40% of the 454 UPK classrooms were in public school sites, with an additional 30% in day care centers and nursery schools. Twelve percent of the classrooms were in Head Start programs. Small percentages of classrooms (less than 10%) were in private schools, special education programs, and BOCES programs.

Percent of Classrooms by Type of Site


Upstate (n=454)

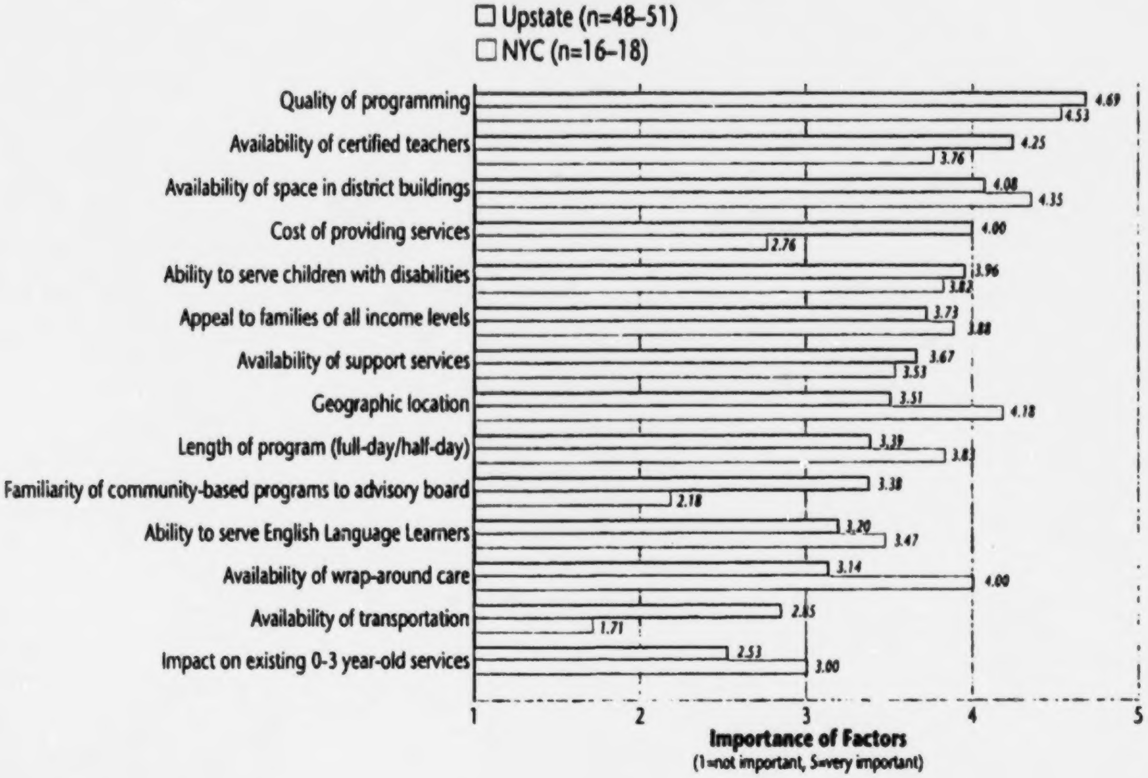
NYC (n=1499)

In New York City, the final reports documented 1499 UPK classrooms. The percentage of classrooms in public school sites was 37%, with an additional 45% in day care centers and nursery schools. Head Start provided services in 8% of the classrooms. Small percentages of classrooms were in private schools and special education programs. In addition, family/group family day care providers were used in 2% of the classrooms.

Selection of UPK Sites

The surveys provided information on how districts selected their UPK sites. Overall, the most important factors for the upstate districts in selecting sites were quality of programming and availability of certified teachers. Districts also rated availability of space in district buildings, cost of providing

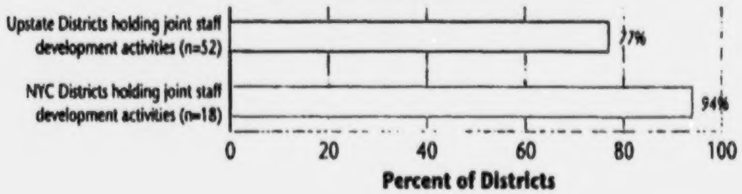
Factors in Choosing UPK Sites



services, and the ability to serve children with disabilities highly. The least important considerations were availability of transportation and impact on existing services to 0-3 year-olds.

The New York City districts gave high ratings to quality of programming and availability of space. Other important factors were geographic location, availability of wrap-around care, and the ability to serve families of all income levels. Availability of transportation and familiarity of programs to advisory board members were rated as the least important considerations.

Districts that Hold Joint Staff Development Activities for Agency Personnel



Joint Staff Development Activities

Additionally, the survey findings provided a clear indication that UPK staff development resources were shared with the early childhood community beyond the school district. Approximately 75% of the upstate districts and 95% of the New York City districts held joint staff development training for district and community-based staff. This outreach into the community-based early childhood network represented a clear manifestation of broad-based collaboration by the reporting school districts. However, it is unknown how frequently or to what extent community-based personnel were included in the training. Were community-based programs included in all or just some of the training? Was the training open to all types of personnel (directors, teachers, and support staff) or directors only? How accessible are the other resources, such as district staff developers?

Head Start Involvement in Universal Prekindergarten

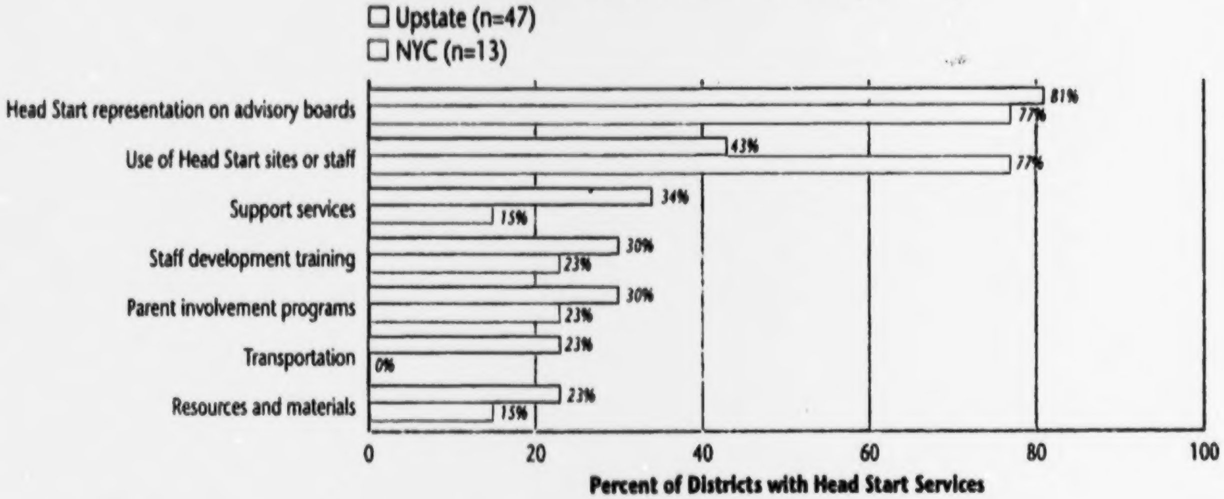
Head Start has been providing federal funds for services to four-year-old children in low-income families since 1965. Given the prominence of this federal role, it is important to understand how such activities relate to somewhat parallel state initiatives. Final report data from all Wave One districts indicated that Head Start provided services to about 12% of the upstate children and 8% of the New York City children. Survey data allowed for a closer look at Head Start involvement in UPK.

Forty-seven (87%) of the upstate districts had a Head Start program in their district. Of these 47 districts, 43% used Head Start sites or staff for their UPK programming. In addition, between 20% and 35% used Head Start resources, including support services, staff development training, parent involvement programs, transportation, and other resources and materials.

In New York City, 13 (72%) of the districts that responded to the survey had a Head Start program in their districts. Of these 13 districts, 77% utilized Head Start staff or sites for UPK. Many districts also used Head Start services. About one-quarter of the districts mentioned staff development training and parent involvement programs as services utilized for UPK.

Head Start has been providing federal funds for services to four-year-old children in low-income families since 1965.

Utilization of Head Start Services for UPK Programming



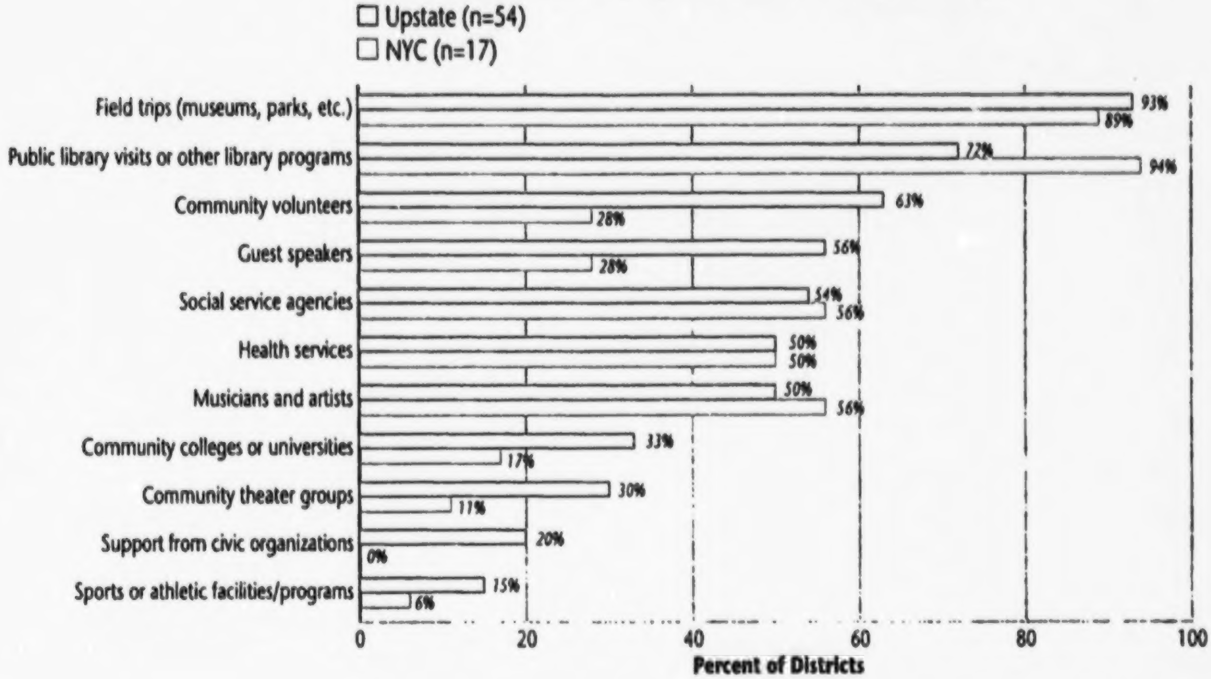
Head Start representatives served on UPK advisory boards in a substantial majority of districts. In both the upstate and New York City districts, approximately 80% of the districts with Head Start programs had Head Start representation on their boards.

In addition, fifteen upstate districts and three New York City districts provided specific examples of other ways in which Universal Prekindergarten is involved with Head Start. These included the Even Start activities, visitations at both programs, planning activities, shared assessments, transition planning, workshops, home/school visitors, referrals, kindergarten registration, and sharing of transportation costs.

These Head Start-related findings provide a useful picture of how state and federal programs can work together on behalf of four-year-olds and their families. This collaboration in New York is built in part upon a long-term working relationship between Head Start and New York's Experimental Prekindergarten Program.

Use of Community Resources
Along with child care centers, nursery schools, private schools, special education programs, and Head Start programs, districts utilized a variety of other community resources in their UPK programs. Surveys returned by district coordinators revealed that almost all of upstate districts included field trips in their UPK programming. Almost 75% of districts participated in public library visits or took part in other library programs, and approximately 50% used community volunteers, guest speakers, musicians and artists, social service agencies, and health services. About one-third of districts utilized community colleges or universities and local theater groups, and 20% of districts received support from civic organizations.

In New York City, almost all districts reported using public library visits or other library programs, as well as field trips. Use of social service agencies, health services, and musicians and artists were mentioned by about half of the districts. About a quarter of the districts used community volunteers and guest speakers.



Utilization of Community Resources for UPK Programming

Over half of the upstate districts (54%) and about 20% of the New York City districts included students from other schools, colleges, and universities in UPK program enhancement. This involvement consisted primarily of student reading volunteers, field placements, student aides, and volunteers. In addition, faculty and staff from colleges and universities have been involved with UPK by conducting staff development activities; serving as advisory board members, consultants, and mentor teachers; using UPK classrooms for community college observation classes; holding discussions about certification; conducting research; and assisting with programming, curriculum development, and special events.

These activities are another indication of heavy involvement with community resources. Districts have demonstrated creativity in the ways they have drawn upon the individuals, services, and programs in their communities to expand or enhance services for young children and their families, as well as for teachers and staff. More information is needed, however, to determine the extent to which activities such as field trips are developmentally appropriate for young children, and which resources are available for families and children.

Districts have demonstrated creativity in the ways they have drawn upon the individuals, services, and programs in their communities...

UPK Advisory Boards

The UPK law and regulations required districts to establish an advisory board in the year prior to their implementation of UPK. From the survey responses, 72% of the upstate districts and 83% of the New York City districts reported that they had an advisory board currently in place. These districts continued their boards even though they were no longer required by the UPK legislation or regulations. Advisory board attention was focused in a number of general areas:

- Program evaluation and review
- Planning activities
- Program improvement
- Discussion of curriculum issues
- Communication and information sharing
- Selection of students and discussion of selection criteria
- Lobbying and advocacy for implementation and expansion of program
- Selection of community-based agencies
- Program monitoring
- Site visitation
- Developing family involvement and parent education activities
- Creation of Request for Proposal and review of contracts and policies
- Discussion of funding

Numerous other resources provided advice and assistance to districts in their UPK planning and programming efforts. These included resources within and outside of the district:

- Central administration
- Directors' meetings
- District kindergarten teachers
- Designated district employees
- District-wide committees
- UPK coordinators in other districts
- Regional curriculum councils
- Family workers
- Subgroups from original advisory board
- School-community collaboration committees
- Parent groups and advisory councils
- Higher education agencies
- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies
- Even Start
- Consultants
- Community agencies
- Head Start supervisors

The data suggest that districts have continued to give attention to implementing high quality programs through discussion, monitoring, and program improvements. However, it is unknown how frequently the advisory committees met, how many of the original committee members were still involved, who the key decision-makers were, and the extent of these activities.

Family Collaboration

In addition to working together with community agencies, the Universal Prekindergarten Program requires efforts to engage and support families. Parent involvement and the provision of support services to children and families are required components of UPK. In addition, extended day care as described in Chapter 4 is an important component in providing access to UPK and meeting the needs of working families. In this section, placement of children at specific sites, support services, and parent involvement will be examined for insight into the nature of UPK participation with family members.

Placement of Children at UPK Sites

Survey findings indicated that the majority of upstate and all 18 New York City districts used more than one site for their UPK classrooms. Parental preferences and geographic proximity to the home or parental workplace were mentioned most frequently as the factors that determined in which site a child was placed. These findings reflected a high priority on parental choice.

Other factors that determined a child's placement included previous experience with the family, the child's need for English Language or other special services, and the child already in the selected UPK site. Several districts mentioned space availability, location and busing, lottery number selection, and the family's need for transportation, support services, and extended day care as well.

Support Services

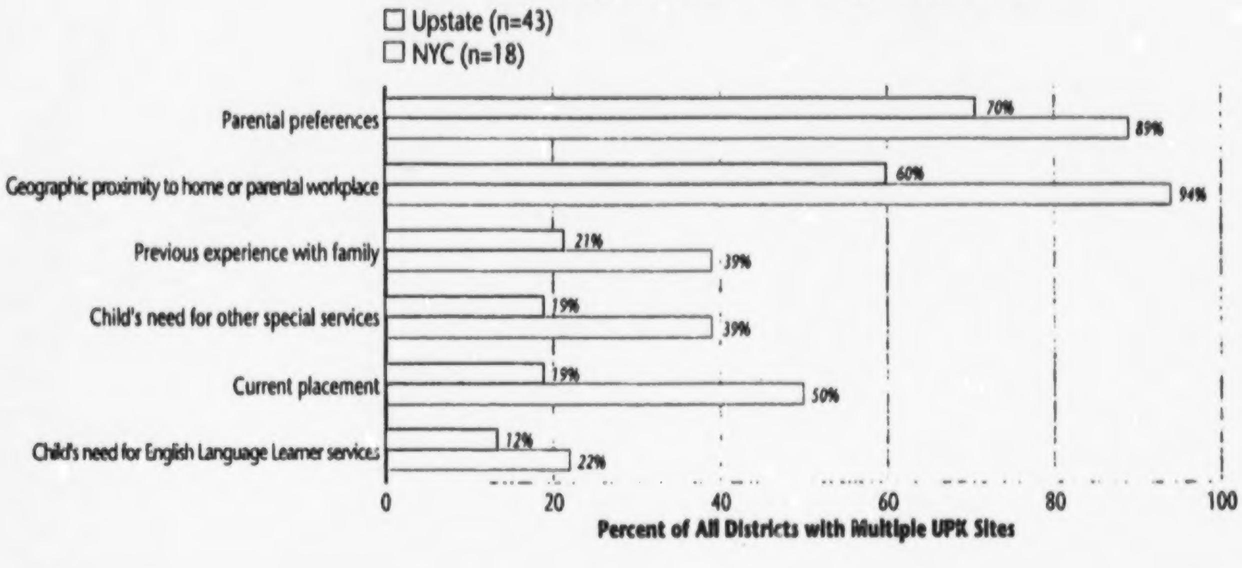
The UPK surveys inquired about the support services that districts utilized in their UPK programming. Upstate districts used resource and referral most frequently, as reported by 85% of the districts using this service. Between 50% and 80% of districts mentioned occupational/physical/speech therapy, health services, special education services, home visits, parent support groups, prekindergarten screening, psychological services, and social/family workers. English language learner services and dental care were used by a smaller number of districts.

In New York City, 17 of the 18 responding districts used social/family workers. In addition, prekindergarten screening, resource and referral, and home visits were used in over 60% of districts. About 40% reported occupational/physical/speech therapy and parent support groups.

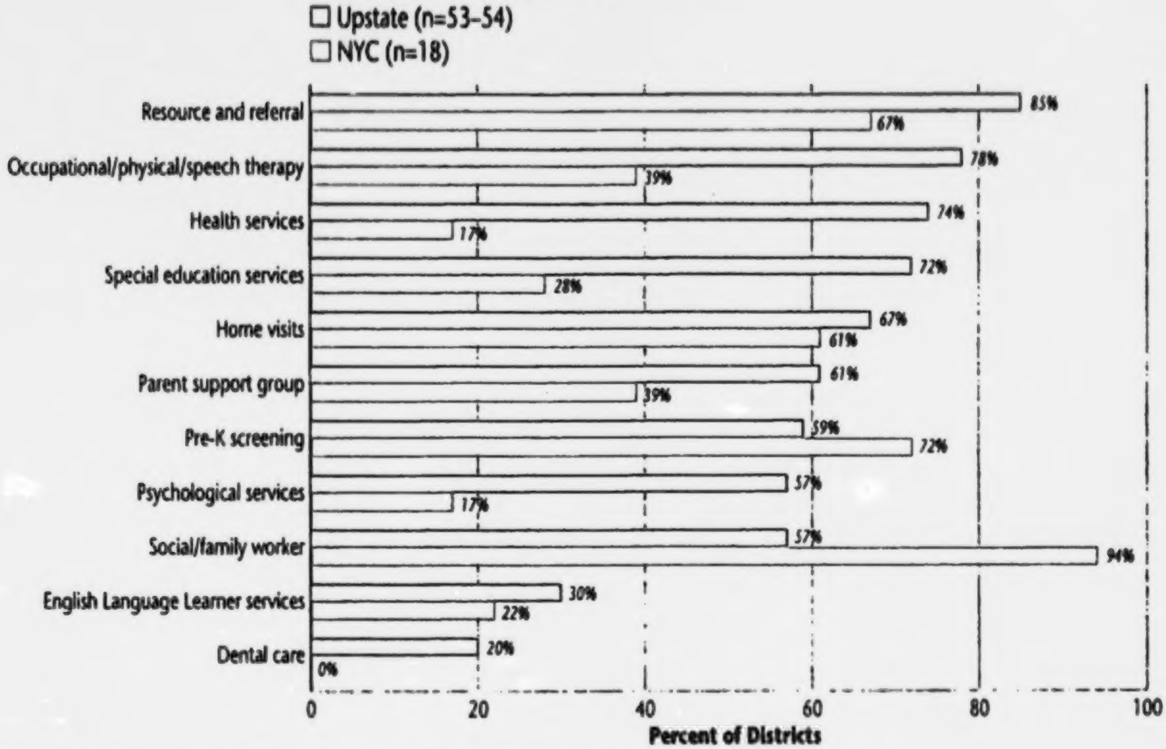
Additional services mentioned by several district coordinators included job training, nutrition, computer training for parents, vision and hearing screening, and lead screening.

These findings provide evidence of a strong focus on parents and families. Especially noteworthy is the number of districts conducting home visits, sponsoring parent support groups, and making social work services available to families. More information is needed to determine the nature of the home visits and use of other support services. For example, are the home

Factors Determining Child Placement among Multiple UPK Sites



Support Services Utilized by Districts



visits initial visits with families, to gather information for referrals to special services, for prevention, or are they due to a crisis, such as absenteeism or suspected abuse? To what extent are services actually utilized by the families?

Furthermore, dental care was not checked by any of the New York City districts even though it is part of Head Start comprehensive services and many districts utilized Head Start programs for UPK. This suggests that district coordinators may not be fully aware of the range of services provided by Head Start.

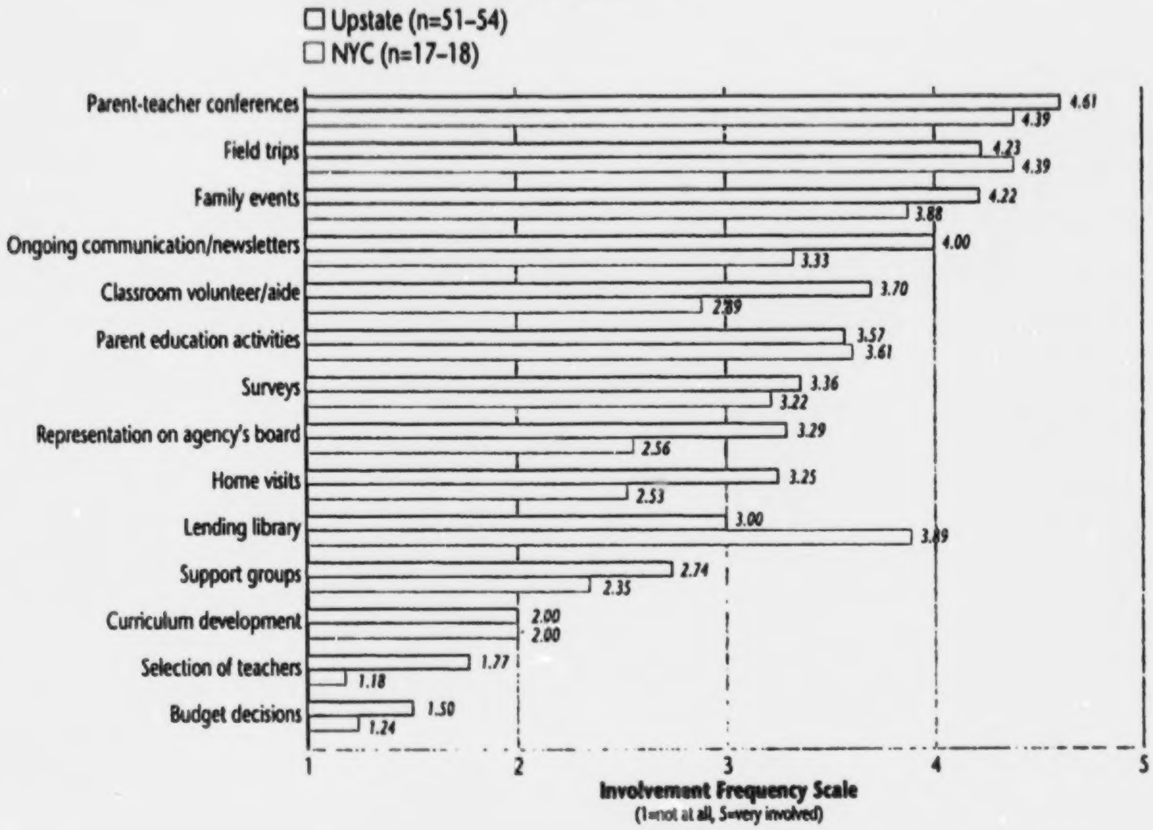
Parent and Family Involvement

On the surveys, UPK coordinators indicated that families were involved in a wide range of activities. Parent-teacher conferences, field trips, family events, and ongoing communication and newsletters were mentioned most frequently by the upstate districts. Other activities included serving as a classroom volunteer or aide, parent education activities, completing surveys, and serving on agency boards. Families, however, were not as active in curriculum development, teacher selection, or budget decisions.

In New York City, the most common activities were parent-teacher conferences, field trips, family events, and lending libraries. Similarly, involvement in curriculum development, teacher selection, and budget decisions were strategies not commonly used.

The UPK coordinators mentioned several other types of family involvement activities. These included opportunities to attend Head Start and other workshops, family reading projects, fundraisers, parent groups, classroom visits, PTA groups, and special projects and activities.

Family Involvement in UPK Activities



Districts encouraged a great deal of activity related to parents and families. However, the strategies used most often fell on the less intensive end of the high intensity-low intensity continuum, with few districts reporting that parents were very involved in curriculum development, the selection of teachers, or budget decisions. It is also unknown to what extent all parents are involved in the various activities or if participation is limited to only a few of the parents. Furthermore, to what extent are opportunities to participate restricted due to work schedules or transportation difficulties?

The survey asked district coordinators about their level of satisfaction with parent involvement. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1=very dissatisfied and 5=very satisfied, coordinators rated satisfaction levels an average of 3.74 in upstate districts and 2.78 in New York City districts. Overall they were somewhat satisfied with the amount of parent involvement in their districts, but they did see room for some improvement here.

Findings: Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally appropriate practice with young children involves a clear understanding of the age, interests, strengths, and needs of children being served, as well as assessments that measure the change and progress of individual children rather than making comparisons among the children in a group. Several survey questions attempted to address these issues in relation to district universal prekindergarten programs. In this section, curriculum, assessment, and transition to kindergarten activities are addressed.

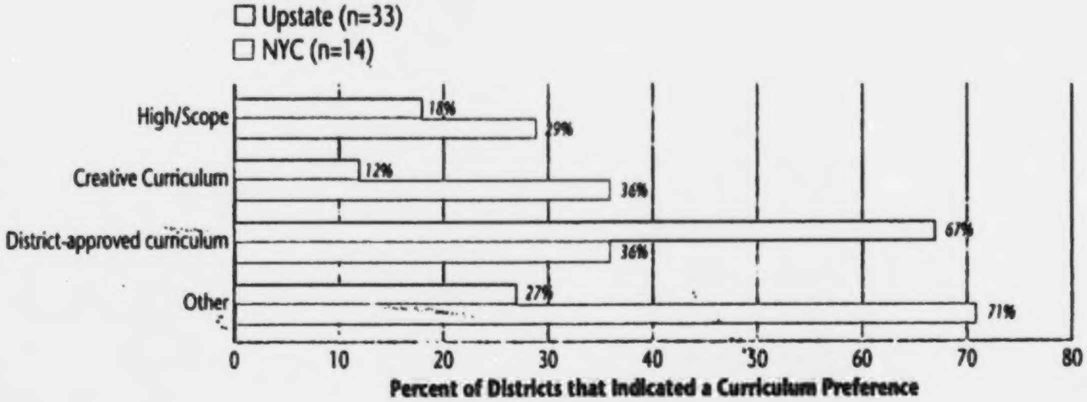
Approximately 60% of the upstate and 75% of the New York City districts advocated for a particular curriculum in their UPK programs.

Use of Curriculum

Approximately 60% of the upstate and 75% of the New York City districts advocated for a particular curriculum in their UPK programs. These upstate districts used a district-approved curriculum most frequently (67%), whereas New York City districts used a variety of curricula.

Other curricula and approaches included the Head Start guidelines or performance standards; Reggio Emilia approach; child-centered, multisensorial approach; Saxon Math; Assured Readiness for Learning; Balanced Literacy adapted for Pre-K; Three, Four, Open the Door; Math/English Alignment; and use of the New York State Preschool Planning Guide. For those districts using a "district approved" curriculum, an effort was made to learn more about the curricular approach by reviewing the appropriate UPK plans and annual reports. These searches provided very little additional information.

UPK Curriculum Preference



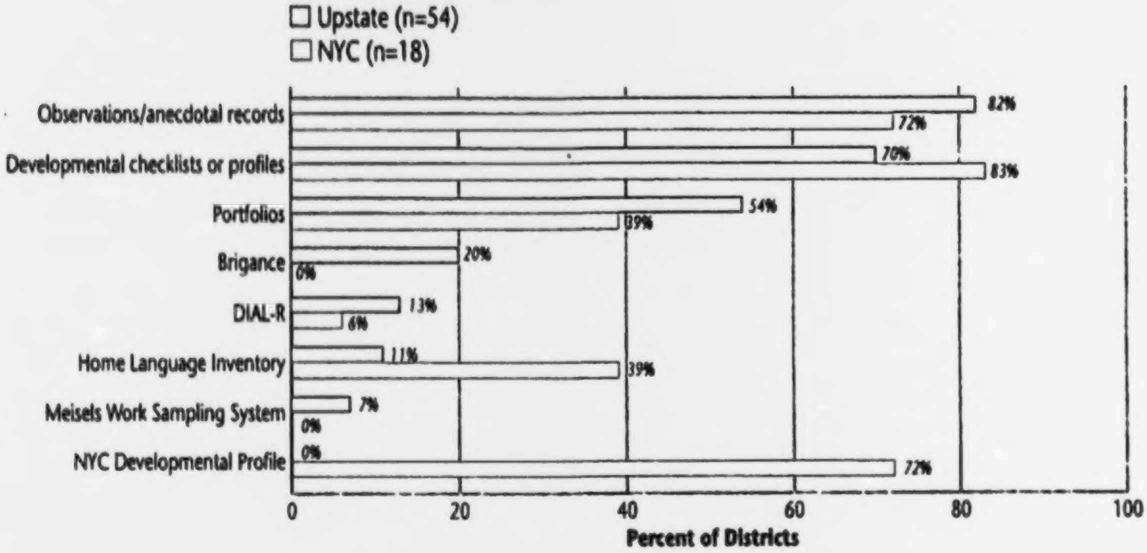
Assessment Measures

Assessment measures most commonly mentioned by upstate districts were observations/anecdotal records (82%), developmental checklists or profiles (70%), and portfolios (54%). A smaller percentage of districts used the Brigance, DIAL-R, Home Language Inventory, and Meisels Work Sampling System. In New York City, districts commonly used developmental checklists or profiles (83%), observations/anecdotal records (72%), and the New York City Developmental Profile (72%). Portfolios and the Home Language Inventory were used in about 40% of districts. About 70% of the upstate districts and 60% of the New York City districts planned some type of follow-up assessment of the UPK children in the primary grades.

Coordinators also mentioned a number of other measures. These included pre/post measures, emotional behavior checklists, Gesell Preschool Assessment, literacy benchmark levels and profiles, PSI, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), Bracken, Learning Accomplishment Profile-D, Early Childhood Developmental Assessment Form, and specific district measures.

The data suggested that although a wide variety of assessment measures were used, they are typically being used in a criterion-referenced rather than a norm-referenced manner, focusing on changes in individual children over time rather than on comparing individual children with group norms. This emphasis on documenting changes in individual children over time is developmentally appropriate, and it supports curricular approaches oriented to individual differences in the rate and sequencing of development in young children.

Child Assessment Measures Used



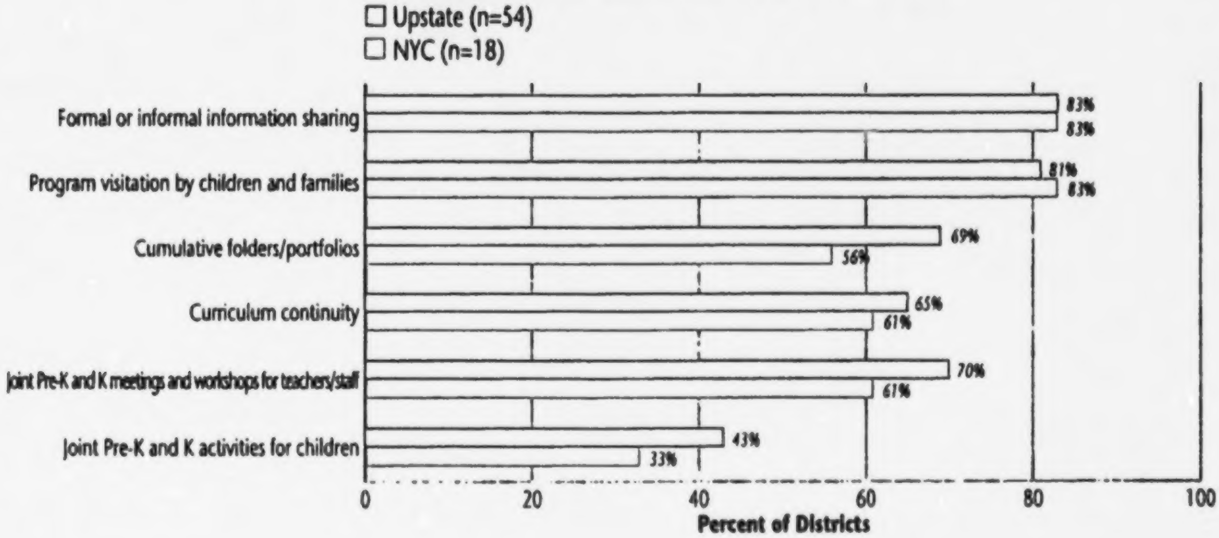
Transitions and Continuity

The transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten is one of the key areas districts are required to address in their UPK program plans. The UPK survey asked districts about the specific transition and continuity activities they had in place.

The most commonly used continuity activities included formal or informal information sharing and program visitation by children and families, which were mentioned by over 80% of both upstate and New York City districts. Cumulative folders and portfolios, curriculum continuity, and joint prekindergarten and kindergarten meetings and workshops for teachers and staff were widely used as well, involving 50% to 70% of districts. Over 40% of upstate and 33% of New York City districts used joint activities for pre-K and kindergarten children. Additional activities and strategies included team teaching and multi-age classes, summer programs and camps, permanent record folders, and continuity conferences.

While not addressed in the survey, it would be beneficial to learn more about strategies used for the transition of four-year-olds into prekindergarten. In addition, more information is needed about collaboration with early intervention providers for children with disabilities and other special needs.

Continuity Activities for Pre-K/Kindergarten Transition

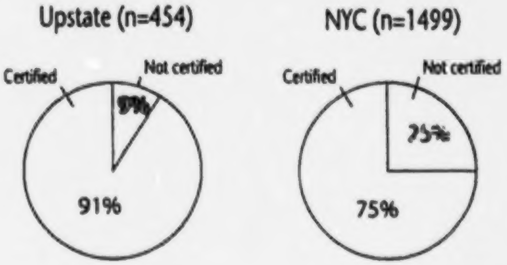


CHAPTER SEVEN

Findings: Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation involves education and in-service opportunities focused on knowledge about how four-year-olds develop and learn, along with methods of teaching built on that knowledge. Preparation must also include supervised experience working with preschool children. This chapter provides information about teacher certification, experience working in preschool classrooms, and staff development as they relate to the qualifications of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) teachers.

Percent of Classrooms with Certified Teachers



Teacher Certification

The UPK legislation requires all teachers in UPK classrooms to be certified by the 2001-2002 school year, or Year Four of UPK.[24] The final report data presented below provide information on the percentage of UPK classrooms with certified teachers during Year Two, 1999-2000, two years prior to activation of the certification requirement. These data indicated that over 90% of the upstate UPK classrooms and 75% of New York City UPK classrooms had a certified teacher at that point.

Closer examination of teacher certification by type of program indicated differences in certification rates among the various programs. Almost all school-based classrooms both upstate and in New York City districts had a certified teacher. Community-based and Head Start classrooms had a lower rate of certified teachers, particularly in New York City. Less than half of the Head Start teachers in New York City were state-certified.

From these findings, it is clear that the focus of the certification effort must be on community-based classrooms, including Head Start. Once the certification requirement takes effect, districts may have increased difficulty locating an adequate number of community-based sites if those sites are unable to find and attract certified teachers into their programs. Furthermore, more information is needed about the percentage of teachers with provisional certification and any challenges they face in achieving full certification.[25]

Percent of Classrooms with Certified Teachers by Site Location Type

	School-based	**Community-based**	**Head Start**
Upstate (n=454)	99%	85%	85%
NYC (n=1499)	91%	68%	44%

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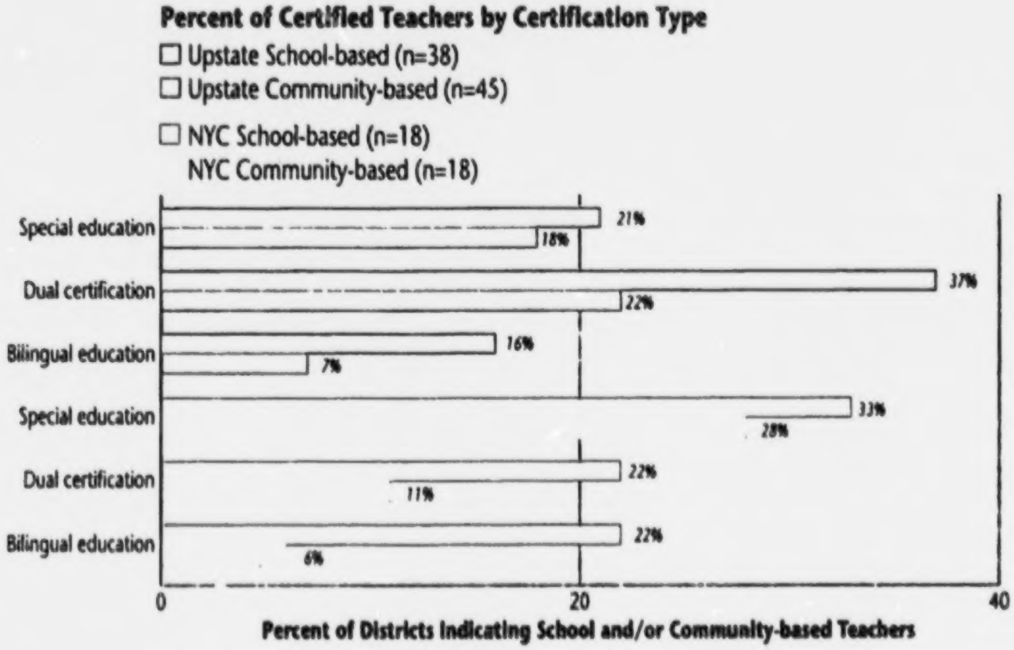
[24] In New York State, the certification for teachers wishing to work with four-year-olds covers nursery school through grade 6. A new certification that covers ages 0–8 is planned to take effect at a later date. Both require a master's degree.

[25] Teachers with provisional certification are classified as "certified" for State reporting purposes and eligibility for teaching in UPK classrooms. However, these teachers will need to complete all educational and experience requirements within a certain time period in order to achieve full certification, and thus the ability to continue teaching in UPK classrooms.

Types of Certification

Districts indicated that most of their UPK teachers had the state elementary N-6 certification. In addition, as shown below, some districts reported the availability of teachers with more specialized certificates. For example, approximately 20% of the upstate districts and 30% of the New York City districts had teachers with special education certification in both school-based and community sites.



Experience in Prekindergarten Classrooms

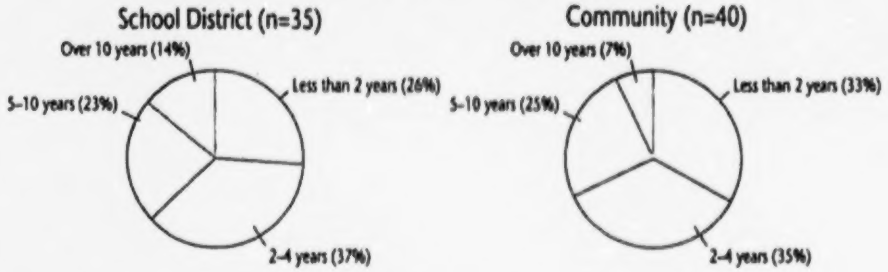
The UPK surveys provided information about the experience of teachers in prekindergarten classrooms. Over 60% of upstate districts reported that their teachers in both school-based and community sites had taught in Pre-K classrooms for less than five years. About one-quarter of respondents indicated that their teachers had between five and ten years experience, and there was little indication of teachers with more than a decade of work with preschool children.

In New York City, all of the district respondents estimated that their community-based teachers had taught four-year-olds for less than five years. However more than half of those districts indicated that their school-based teachers had five to ten years of experience with preschool children.

These findings suggest that in-service staff development efforts need to be designed for teachers with relatively little classroom experience. They also indicate that opportunities exist for more experienced teachers to mentor less experienced ones.

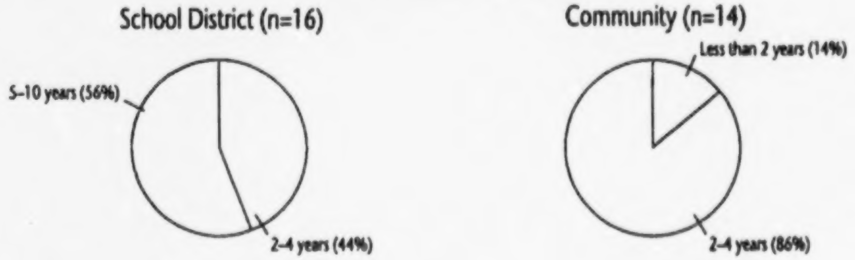
...in-service staff development efforts need to be designed for teachers with relatively little classroom experience.

Upstate Teachers' Early Education Experience


School District (n=35)

Community (n=40)

NYC Teachers' Early Education Experience


School District (n=16)

Community (n=14)

Transferring into Universal Prekindergarten

Surveys indicated that in 24% of the upstate districts, teachers previously working in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms had transferred into UPK. In these districts, the average number of teachers that transferred was three, with a range from 1 to 14. Ten of the 18 districts in New York City (56%) had teachers who made such transfers. The New York City average was 5 teachers, with a range from 1 to 12.

From these data, it is estimated that approximately 10% of the UPK teachers had recent experience teaching older children. This raises the possibility that they are relatively uninformed about and inexperienced with the developmental capacities and needs of four-year-olds. It also suggests that such possible gaps in preparation need systematic attention when planning in-service staff development efforts.

Staff Development

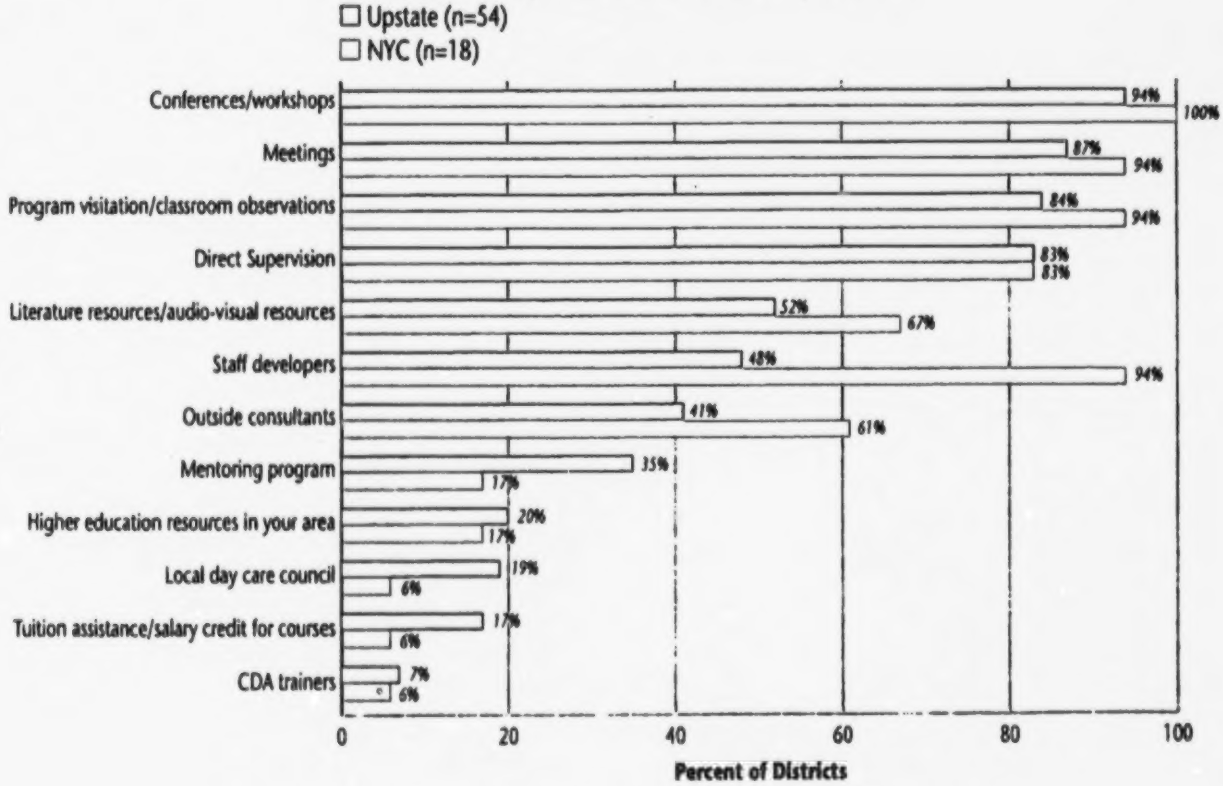
Districts reported a wide range of staff development activities in their work with UPK teachers. Over 90% of upstate districts used conferences and workshops as a strategy, and more than 80% included meetings, program visitation/classroom observations, and direct supervision. In addition, literature/audio-visual resources, and staff developers were used by approximately 50% of the upstate districts. Other strategies and resources involved the use of outside consultants, mentoring programs, higher education resources, the local day care council, and CDA trainers, as well as providing tuition assistance for courses.

Similarly, all New York City districts provided the opportunity to attend conferences and workshops. Over 80% of districts reported meetings, program visitation/classroom observations, direct supervision, and staff developers. Literature/audio-visual resources and outside consultants were used by about 60% of the reporting districts in New York City.

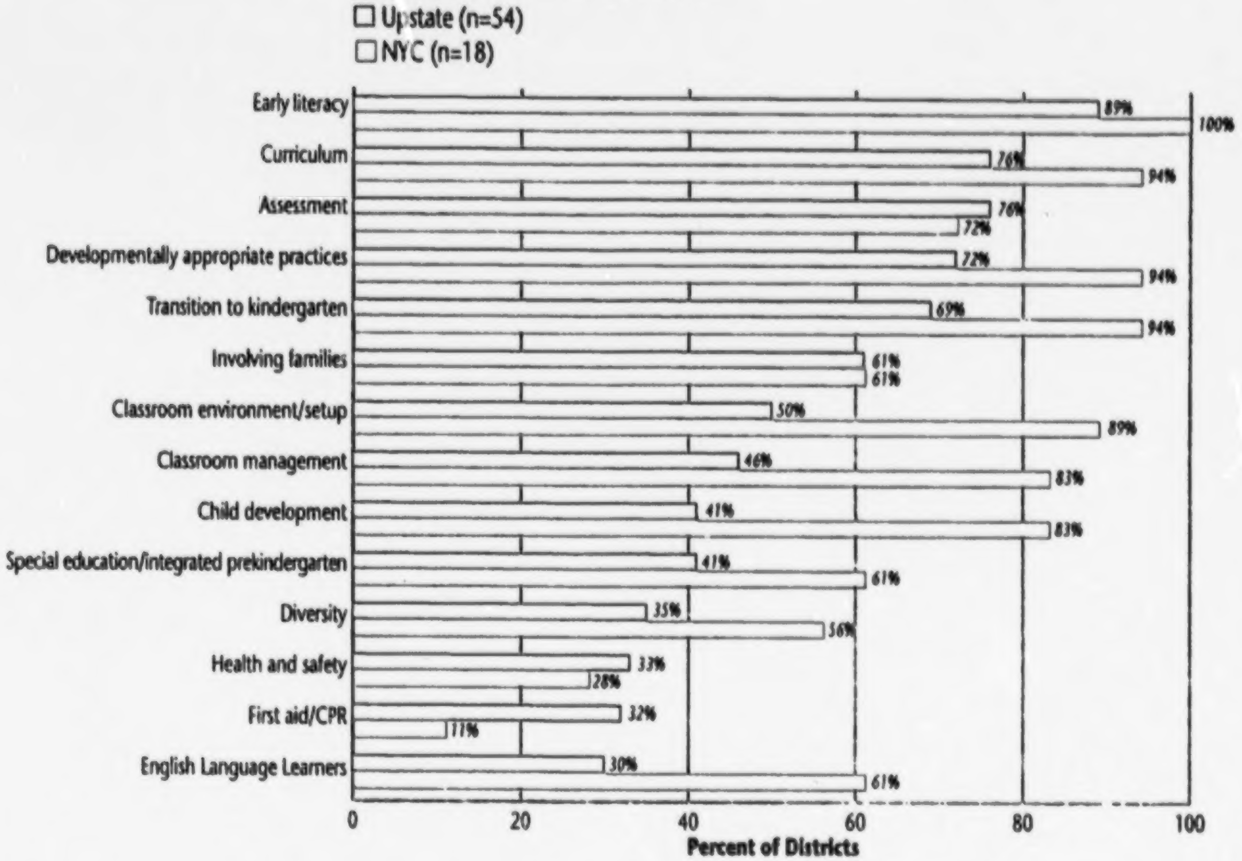
Districts planned to cover a wide range of topics as part of their staff development efforts. Between 60% and 90% of the upstate districts mentioned early literacy, curriculum, assessment, developmentally appropriate practice, the transition to kindergarten, and involving families as staff development topics. Approximately half of the upstate districts planned to cover classroom environment and management, and over one-third listed child development, special education, diversity, health and safety, first aid, and services to English Language Learners.

The pattern was similar in New York City, where staff development put considerable emphasis on programming for children of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and for those with first languages other than English. All of the districts intended to address early literacy. Particular attention also was given to curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, the transition to kindergarten, set-up of the classroom environment, classroom management, and child development.

Resources/Strategies Used for Staff Development



Topics Districts Planned to Cover



CHAPTER□EIGHT

Findings: Financing

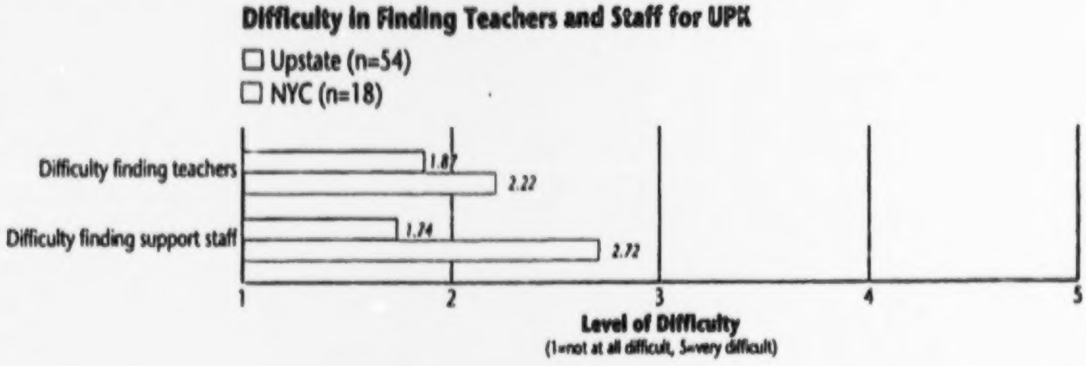
Financing Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) is a critical issue of concern to school districts when implementing their programs. For example, the certification requirement that will take effect in the 2001-2002 year is likely to raise the cost of preschool programming for those community-based UPK sites that have not previously employed a certified teacher. Certified teachers can be expected to require higher salaries than those without certification. This section examines issues related to financing: Finding qualified teachers and staff, teacher salaries, funding for UPK, and funding to community-based programs.

...the certification requirement that will take effect in the 2001-2002 year is likely to raise the cost of preschool programming for community-based UPK sites...

Finding Teachers and Support Staff

On the UPK surveys, district coordinators were asked how difficult it was to find adequate numbers of qualified teachers and support staff for UPK. In general, coordinators reported little difficulty in attracting these employees. On a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = "not at all difficult" to 5 = "very difficult," upstate coordinators had an average score of 1.87 for teachers and 1.74 for support staff. New York City coordinators indicated slightly more difficulty than did those in upstate areas, with an average score of 2.72 for teachers and 2.22 for support staff.

These findings reflected the data presented earlier on the percentages of certified teachers in the UPK classrooms. Almost all school-based and a large percentage of community-based sites in both upstate and New York City districts already had certified teachers in their UPK classrooms. However, the respondents reporting relative lack of difficulty in finding certified teachers, as reflected in the data above, may have been focusing primarily on the filling of teacher positions *in school-based settings, where salaries tend to be*



Difficulty in Finding Teachers and Staff for UPK

...community-based certified teachers are likely to leave for school-based jobs when the opportunity arises.

relatively high. Data reported later on barriers to UPK site selection suggested that the lack of certified teachers in some community sites has inhibited expansion of UPK services into those locales.

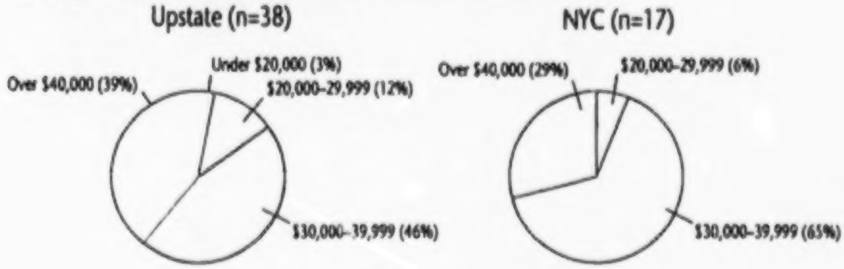
For those that did indicate difficulty finding certified teachers, the reasons were primarily financial—low salaries and benefits in community-based programs. Other reasons included half-day programs that do not result in a full-time job, employment practices at agencies, and small pools of potential employees in rural areas.

Teacher Salaries

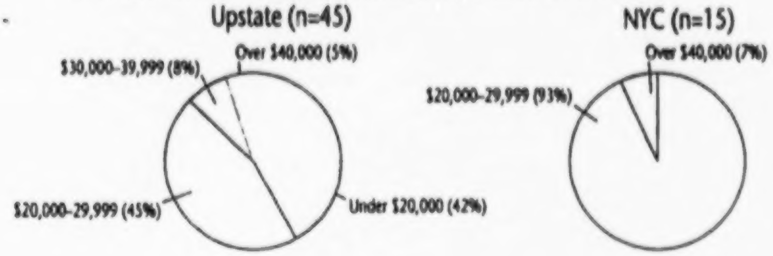
The UPK surveys provided information on teacher salaries. District UPK coordinators were asked to estimate the annual salaries of UPK teachers in district and community-based sites. Teacher salaries for both upstate and New York City districts were considerably higher for the district sites. Eight-five percent of the upstate districts indicated that their school-based teachers earned over $30,000 per year. For the community-based teachers, the numbers were reversed, with approximately 85% of districts reporting the teachers earning under $30,000. A similar pattern can be noted for New York City teachers.

The disparity between what school- and community-based teachers were paid means that community-based certified teachers are likely to leave for school-based jobs when the opportunity arises. In addition, low salaries for community-based teachers, 70% to 80% of whom are certified, means that some will leave teaching for higher paying professions. Further investigation is needed to determine whether use of UPK funds is resulting in improved salaries for community-based preschool teachers.

Average Annual Salary of District-Based UPK Teachers



Average Annual Salary of Community-Based UPK Teachers



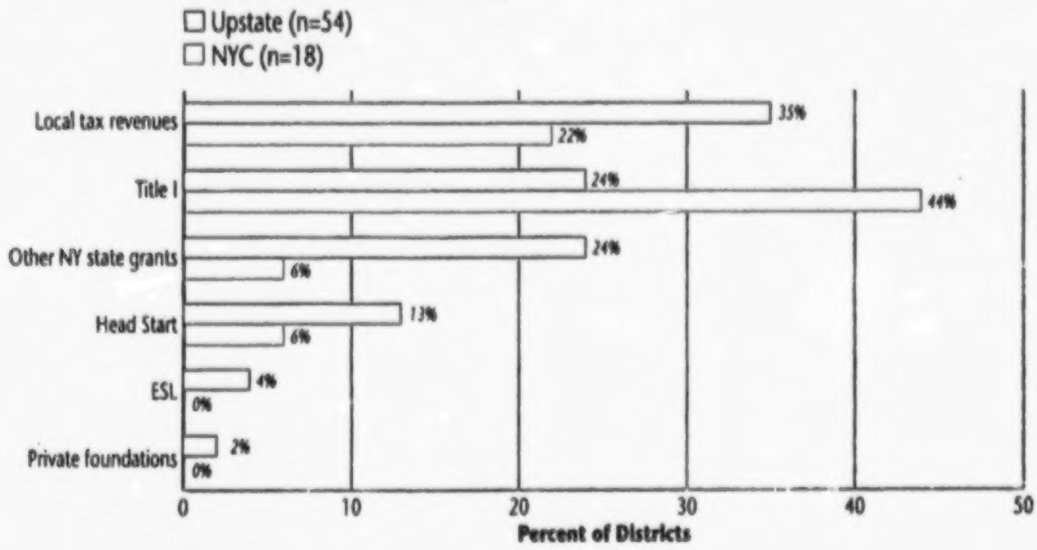
Funding for Universal Prekindergarten

The UPK surveys indicated that two-thirds (65%) of the upstate and 50% of the New York City districts used funding from sources other than UPK funding for UPK programming. Most frequently mentioned by the upstate districts were local tax revenues, followed by Title I funds and other state grants. In New York City, Title I was reported most often, followed by local tax revenues.

Revenues of Community-Based Programs

The surveys also inquired if the revenues per child in community-based programs had increased as a result of being involved with UPK. Forty-eight of the responding upstate districts utilized community-based sites. Of these, approximately 20% indicated an increase in revenue per child and 30% indicated no increase. However, the remaining 50% did not know whether or not there had been any increase. Similar findings were noted for New York City, where 31% indicated an increase, 13% reported no increase, and the remaining 56% did not know. The large percentage of survey respondents unaware of whether UPK funds were expanding the financial resources available to community-based programs suggests that districts may need to give more attention to how community-based early care and education programs are financed in their local communities.

Other Sources of UPK Funding



CHAPTER NINE

Findings: Program Successes & Challenges

The Universal Prekindergarten surveys provided an opportunity for UPK coordinators to express the successes and challenges their districts encountered during their second year of UPK implementation. In this chapter, information is provided on the districts' satisfaction with the various aspects of UPK, meeting the needs of children and families, successful program aspects, areas in need of improvement, and barriers to community agency participation.

Satisfaction with Universal Prekindergarten

Using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied," UPK coordinators rated a number of aspects of the UPK program. Overall, the coordinators reported moderate to high levels of satisfaction. Local Board of Education support for UPK, the working relationship between school district and community-based providers, meeting the needs of children, and community support for UPK received the highest ratings. In New York City, technical assistance from the Board of Education also was rated highly. The lowest levels of satisfaction involved the amount of available space, the amount of funding provided by the state, and for the upstate districts, fund distribution procedures.

	Upstate Average (n=46–54)	**NYC Average (n=17–18)**
Board of Education support for UPK	4.55	4.56
Working relationship between school district and community-based providers	4.39	4.50
Meeting needs of children	4.37	3.94
Community support for UPK	4.17	3.94
Working relationship of advisory board	4.08	3.71
Meeting needs of families	4.02	3.50
Availability of qualified teachers	3.94	2.89
Child assessment policies	3.81	3.35
Ease of administration of UPK program	3.80	3.24
Quality of community-based providers	3.77	3.72
Request for Proposal (RFP) process	3.74	3.50
Technical assistance from the State Education Department	3.69	3.35
Technical assistance from the Board of Education	3.63	4.12
Ability to monitor sites	3.56	2.89
Availability of qualified community-based providers	3.13	3.06
Amount of funding provided locally (if applicable)	3.10	2.71
Fund distribution procedures	2.92	3.06
Amount of available space	2.94	2.55
Amount of funding provided by the state	2.09	2.33

Scale 1-5; 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied

The lowest levels of satisfaction involved the amount of available space, the amount of funding provided by the state, and for the upstate districts, fund distribution procedures.

Meeting the Needs of Children and Families

Overall, the coordinators felt quite strongly that their districts were able to meet the needs of children and families in their UPK programs in a number of areas, especially fostering enthusiasm for learning, social skills preparation, promoting self-help skills, pre-academic skills preparation, promoting positive family-school relations, and providing for children in need of special support. Facilitating family access to other community services was rated slightly lower.

	Upstate Average (n=54)	**NYC Average (n=18)**
Foster enthusiasm for learning	4.59	4.67
Social skills preparation	4.37	4.44
Promote self-help skills	4.35	4.61
Pre-academic skills preparation	4.33	4.28
Promote positive family-school relations	4.30	4.28
Support for children in need of special support	4.28	3.88
Facilitate family access to other community services	3.98	3.72

Scale 1-5; 1=not at all; 5=fully

Successful Aspects of Universal Prekindergarten

UPK coordinators indicated a wide range of successful aspects of UPK. These included services to children and families; curriculum, instruction, and programming; teachers and staff; school-community collaboration; and UPK and the community.

Services to Children and Families

- Academic/social/emotional preparedness of UPK students entering kindergarten
- Providing socialization and readiness opportunities
- Early identification of at-risk students and early intervention opportunities
- Parental involvement during and after UPK
- Creative placements to meet family needs
- Ability to provide prekindergarten to upper levels of socio-economic families
- Ability to reach out to a broader cross-section of the community
- Serving more children
- Increased diversity of children in classrooms
- Excellent transition of "Wave One" students to kindergarten
- Integrating special needs preschoolers into prekindergarten
- Satisfaction by families
- Addressing individual needs of students
- Increased communication between teachers, providers, and families

"I would say every aspect has been successful because a supported program now exists where there was none before."

Curriculum, Instruction, and Programming

- Additional year of instruction for children
- Implementation of the district's developmental curriculum and assessment
- Integration with existing Experimental Prekindergarten Program
- Raising standards of programs for children
- Continuity with kindergarten curriculum
- Home visitor component
- Quality of community program curriculum
- Excellent quality of the staff and support services
- Ability to purchase materials and resources
- Physical location of UPK in schools
- Needed literacy instruction for children

Teachers and Staff

- Teachers feel like part of district faculty
- Receiving feedback from kindergarten teachers
- Staff development and professional conferences
- Quality of teachers
- Use of certified teachers

School-Community Collaboration

- Cooperation of community agencies
- Collaboration between district staff and agency providers
- Successful collaboration with Head Start
- Incorporation of non-public schools into UPK
- Quality of community agencies
- Using the community locations as prekindergarten providers
- Building trust with community providers
- Networking among community providers

UPK and the Community

- Community support for UPK
- Positive public relations value of program
- Ability to use community resources
- Awareness of the need for early education

The successful aspects of UPK can be illustrated further by several comments of UPK coordinators:

"We've provided a quality educational program for the students we've been able to service."

"I would say every aspect has been successful because a supported program now exists where there was none before."

"The amount of learning that goes on in UPK is amazing on its own and the preparation of these children for kindergarten is invaluable."

"After two years we are very pleased with the entire program. All aspects have been successful and the collaboration with Head Start has proven very beneficial."

"Parent feedback has been enthusiastic and positive."

"Parent feedback has been enthusiastic and positive."

"We love it."

"We are excited about the opportunity to expand our early childhood programs through the implementation of UPK. For the first time, 50% of kindergarteners entering school in September 2000 will have attended one of our pre-K programs. The achievement results are outstanding for last year's class and this year's class is also moving in that direction..."

"It is amazing that so many new programs, families, and children have been served in such a short period of time."

"Our collaborations with the community-based organizations were successful. The professional development workshops and the first annual UPK conference were wonderful."

Areas in Need of Improvement

District coordinators also identified aspects of UPK that have not been as successful. The primary concerns focused mainly on issues of funding: not enough funding to serve eligible children and the uncertainty of receiving funding due to state budget delays. In addition, coordinators mentioned issues of school-community collaboration, transportation, space, teacher retention in community-based agencies, services to children and families, and programming considerations.

Funding

- Inadequate level of funding
- Uncertainty of funding
- Delay in confirmation of allocation due to New York State budget
- Difficulties in planning and recruitment due to funding not being secured
- Last minute reduction of financial support from the state
- Change in allocations from the State after staff and students are in place
- Restrictions on use of local funds
- Funding program totally on state monies
- Inability to access more funds
- Understanding blended funding

"We could double the program if we had more space."

School-Community Collaboration
- ☐ No qualifying providers in district
- ☐ Finding eligible agency sites
- ☐ Monitoring of community-based agencies
- ☐ Quality of contracted program
- ☐ Relationship with Head Start
- ☐ Not enough time to supervise community-based providers
- ☐ Difficulty coordinating staff of multiple agencies
- ☐ Cumbersome contract process and paperwork

Transportation
- ☐ Transportation for UPK services
- ☐ Transportation for a wrap-around program

Space
- ☐ Program needs more space

Teachers and Staff
- ☐ Retention of qualified teachers
- ☐ Retention of new teachers in community-based programs
- ☐ More time needed to provide joint professional development

Services to Children and Families
- ☐ Not being able to offer UPK to all interested
- ☐ Inability to service all in need due to a lack of funding and lack of transportation
- ☐ Not filling all slots
- ☐ Half day program is too short to meet family needs
- ☐ Lottery selection of students
- ☐ Parent education
- ☐ Families registering for several programs at once without notifying the programs
- ☐ Unable to identify all eligible four-year-olds
- ☐ Differing referral processes to CPSE across providers

Other Programming Concerns
- ☐ Addition of needs-based criteria to legislation
- ☐ Future of Experimental Prekindergarten
- ☐ Transfer of information between UPK and kindergarten
- ☐ No start up funds for set up and/or enhancement

Additional comments provided by coordinators highlight some of the difficulties:

"No transportation has impacted our ability to reach the most vulnerable Pre-K students. This is by far the biggest obstacle to reaching our desired population."

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"Several eligible districts didn't take funds. The funds weren't then offered to other districts. If they had been, they could have been used to serve additional children or provide more money per child."

"We could double the program if we had more space."

"Legislative and government's lack of continued commitment has been the most significant barrier to planning and implementation."

"Our district was minimally able to meet the needs of our UPK children and families from the perspective that money caused us not to serve all who could be served ..."

"The limit of funding makes it quite difficult to provide quality programming (i.e., trips, materials, consultants are not easily obtained with limited funds. Funding is absorbed in salaries, transportation, and food services)."

"First year UPK teachers were all hired by other districts for increased pay and benefit packages. It is so difficult to retain new grads."

"I guess we are off to a good start. The state needs to clearly make a commitment to long-term funding if we want this program to grow and mature. If the state budget is not passed until June or later, it is impossible to engage community partners."

"First year UPK teachers were all hired by other districts for increased pay and benefit packages. It is so difficult to retain new grads."

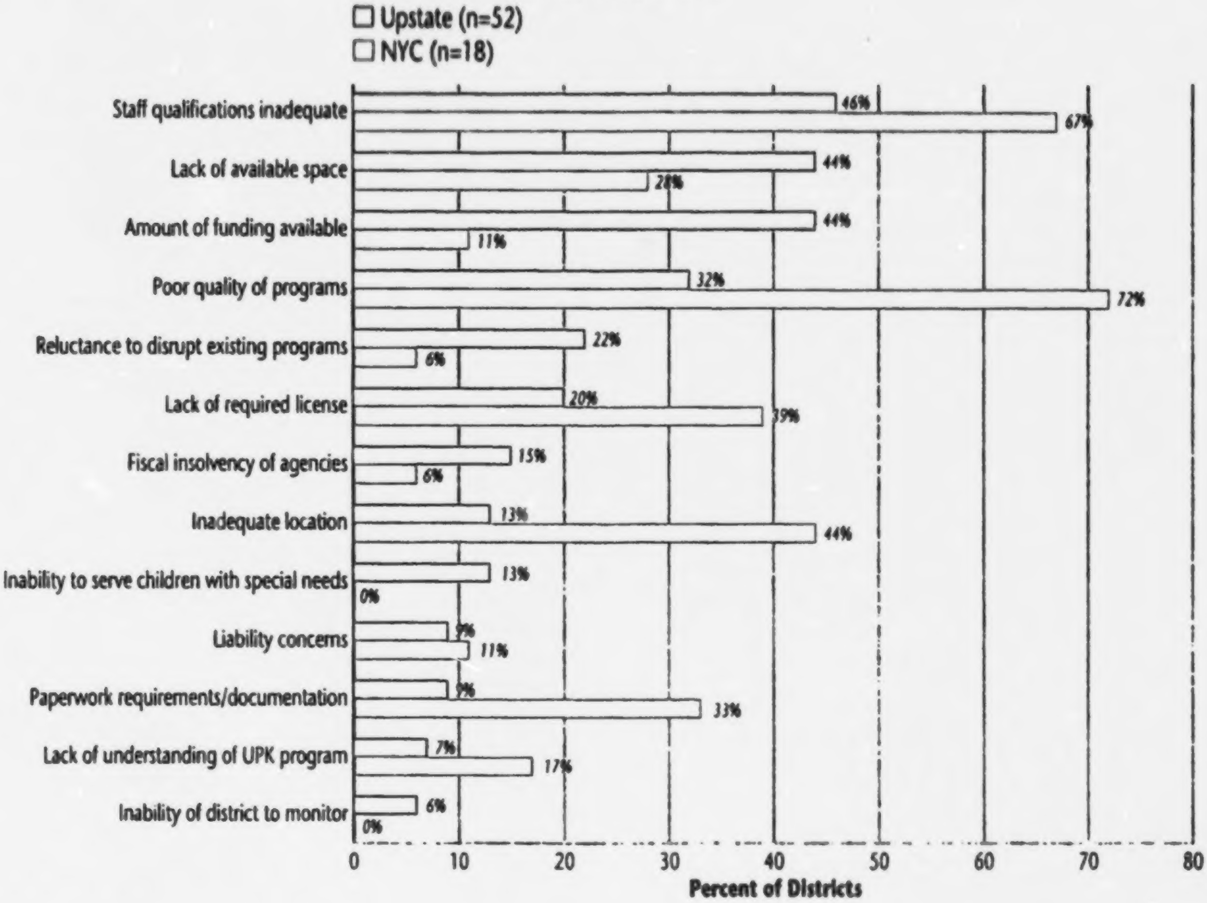
Barriers to Participation

District UPK coordinators indicated multiple barriers that prevented community-based organizations from participating in UPK. The most frequently mentioned barriers for the upstate districts were inadequate staff qualifications, lack of available space, and the amount of funding available. Approximately one-third mentioned poor quality of programs. Liability concerns, paperwork requirements, lack of understanding of UPK, and monitoring issues were problematic for less than 10% of districts.

Staff qualifications and poor quality of programs were mentioned by between 60% and 75% of New York City districts. In addition, 30 to 40% indicated inadequate location, lack of required licenses, and paperwork requirements/documentation as barriers. Lack of available space was mentioned by about one-quarter of the districts.

In addition, coordinators reported other barriers. These included changes in funding due to state budget, lack of available agencies, billing procedures, transportation, lack of interest from programs, issues of union and non-union staff, family needs, religious nature of programs, and program location outside of district boundaries.

Barriers from Participating in UPK



CHAPTER □ TEN

Conclusions & Recommendations

The general principles guiding this research study, as presented in Chapter Two, underscore the importance of focusing on Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) not in isolation but in the context of the broader early care and education system in New York State. The impacts of a prekindergarten program delivered to four-year-olds for 2.5 hours a day during the school year cannot be understood independently of all the other early care and education programs shaping the growth and development of many of those children.[26] The existing system not only contributes to shaping the development of hundreds of thousands of preschoolers in New York State, it also operates as a vital support system for the families to which those preschoolers belong. To overlook the broader impacts of UPK, a $225 million dollar preschool intervention in 2000-2001, might be to place the overarching early care and education system in New York at risk.

Fortunately, the principles guiding this research also are reflected in the intent of the legislation establishing the New York State UPK program. Legislative attention to the needs of and potential in educational settings beyond the public schools is perhaps best reflected in the requirement that school districts contract out at least 10% of the funds allocated to them by the State for UPK services. In order to address these key guiding principles directly, they have been used to organize this concluding chapter, beginning with the universal access principle and then examining findings related to collaboration, developmentally appropriate practices, staff development, and financing.

> *The existing system not only contributes to shaping the development of hundreds of thousands of preschoolers in New York State, it also operates as a vital support system for the families to which those preschoolers belong.*

Universal Access and Diversity

- *Principle:* The universal prekindergarten programs developed by districts serve all eligible children in the district rather than target children with particular developmental characteristics or family backgrounds.

- *Principle:* District universal prekindergarten programs accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families within their districts; meet the needs of children with disabilities; and help children learn about, respect, and appreciate the differences among them.

Who is served by the UPK program? The data presented in Chapter Four show clearly that most of the responding school districts are emphasizing family income criteria when selecting UPK children in this second year of program implementation. There is some indication that this emphasis intensified from Year One to Year Two of the program, possibly in response to the State's Year Two mandate that districts give priority to economically disadvantaged children. In fact, the data in this report indicated that many school districts served a higher percentage of low-income children than the State required. Special attention was given to children with special needs. These emphases reflected the belief in a number of districts that special priority should be given to these children early in the implementation process regardless of the universal intent of the legislation.[27] The "universal" in "Universal Prekindergarten" is still a work in progress in New York State.

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[26] New York State Prekindergarten Assessment Meeting Summary, 2000.

Access to UPK services is also determined by the choice of sites in which those services are delivered. Parents whose children need full-day child care services may choose not to use a UPK service that lasts for only 2.5 hours and then requires that the child be moved to another site for the rest of the day. Many of the school-based sites are part-day only, finishing at noon or at the end of the school day. Thus, those districts that contract with full-day child care and Head Start programs will be more successful at reaching children whose parents' work full-time outside the home than will those who do not include such programs in their array of UPK sites.

It is important to note that this is a "mid-stream" assessment of UPK accessibility; these school districts are only in the second of a four- or five-year program roll-out process. Of interest will be the direction in which districts expand in the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 program years.

Collaboration

❂ *Principle:* District universal prekindergarten programs strengthen and expand existing early care and education networks and programs.

Two-thirds of upstate and all of the reporting New York City school districts espoused a philosophy of UPK program delivery that supported substantial partnership with community organizations and at least equal responsibility to community-based organizations for service provision. The analysis of where UPK sites were actually located indicates that districts have acted on their philosophical orientations. There are differences between upstate and New York City, with districts in the City placing more responsibility for service delivery in the hands of community organizations. Upstate districts revealed the full range of philosophical and programmatic approaches, from predominantly school-based to fully invested in community sites outside the schools. This broad range of approaches presents a valuable learning opportunity—the chance to compare the impacts of school-focused with community-focused approaches on outcomes ranging from classroom practices and child outcomes to the overall quality of the local early care and education system as a whole.

Reasons for UPK Site Choices

The data showing reasons for choosing the UPK sites give meaning to the philosophical orientations districts specified and enrich our understanding of upstate-downstate differences. In upstate districts, the quality of available sites played a particularly prominent role in selection decisions, as reflected both in current programming and in the use of state-certified teachers. Also important were the availability of classroom space in school district buildings and the cost of delivering the UPK service. The desire to serve more four-year-olds with a fixed budget may have pushed district adminis-

[27] Hicks, et al., 1999.

trators to contract with community organizations to a greater extent than otherwise would have been the case. At the same time, the limited number of qualified community-based providers and certified teachers in rural areas may have required rural districts to use district facilities to a greater extent than desired. Further investigation is needed into the unique needs of rural communities. In New York City, program quality also topped the list of reasons for choosing UPK sites. But, not surprisingly, given the high density of City living, space limitations in district buildings ranked a close second in shaping site selection decisions. Also distinguishing the decisions of City districts was a constellation of family-friendly factors: geographic location, the availability of wrap-around care, and the desire to appeal to families of all income levels.

...site selection data presented...painted a picture of a unique partnership between public school districts and other community-based educational organizations.

UPK Financing of Community-Based Services

Overall, the site selection data presented in this report painted a picture of a unique partnership between public school districts and other community-based educational organizations. This should allay any general concern about exclusion of or competition with the larger early care and education community. The "10% of funding contracted out to the community" provision has been surpassed in most school districts to an extent unanticipated by even the most optimistic promoters of community-based provision; the majority of UPK children were served in community sites in the 1999-2000 school year.

When UPK services are provided outside the public schools, UPK funds flow directly from school districts into those community-based organizations. It is also possible that resources are reaching community organizations indirectly through services school districts provide to community-based organizations. The most notable example of this service-oriented collaboration found in the data involves staff development: Over 90% of New York City and 75% of upstate districts conducted staff development activities that included staff both from school-based and community-based UPK sites. If implemented effectively, these educational efforts bring "added value" to the community-based partners in the UPK enterprise, positively affecting teacher competencies and skills and generating a consistent level of quality in preschool programming across the early childhood community.[28]

Collaboration with Head Start

Most of the Wave One school districts included Head Start representatives on their advisory boards, and many districts contracted to have Head Start programs deliver UPK services. These findings demonstrate that federal and state programs focused on four-year-olds do not need to compete with one another, but can be mutually reinforcing if the interest, good will, and flexibility in procedures prevail. UPK in New York provides a solid example of a successful federal-state partnership in operation at the community level. This does not mean that this partnership is as strong as it could be, but does provide a firm base upon which to build.

UPK Advisory Boards

In the Promising Practices report, district UPK advisory boards were urged to continue in operation after the initial drafting of the local plan and initiation of the program, despite the fact that this was not required by the state legislation or regulations.[29] Data presented in Chapter Five indicated that most school districts indeed maintained these advisory bodies. Their ongoing functions ranged from general program review and oversight to more specific activities like development of student selection criteria, selection of participating community-based organizations, and program evaluation. Because these advisory bodies included membership from beyond the "inner circle" of public school employees and school board members, they provided an important ongoing forum for collaborative discussion and action.

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[28] It should be noted that the "joint staff development" criterion applied by our survey was easy for districts to meet. They qualified if *any* staff development activities they were engaged in included community-based staff. Some of the districts counted in the "joint staff development" category may have been including community-based teachers and program directors in only a small portion of the staff development activities.

[29] Hicks, et al., 1999.

...strengthening the involvement of parents with the UPK programs their children attend would be well-received by site directors...

- *Principle:* District universal prekindergarten programs work with other local agencies in a coordinated effort to make support services available to children and their families.

District UPK programs made substantial use of a wide range of community resources beyond the community sites providing prekindergarten services directly. As expected, these included social service agencies and health services. More surprising, over three-quarters of reporting school districts used the public library, and over 90% used field trips as part of the educational program provided by UPK. Involvement with the library probably reflects the considerable emphasis on pre-literacy activities given by UPK (see Chapter Seven, staff development content). Field trips are an allowable use of UPK funds, so heavy use of this educational strategy may have accrued from the fact that funding is available for this purpose.

- *Principle:* Districts make substantial efforts to build partnerships between families and local universal prekindergarten programs.

Another way in which collaboration can occur within prekindergarten programs is through the content and processes involved in relationships with the parents of prekindergarten children. UPK-sponsored family activities were most likely to fall on the less intensive end of the high intensity-low intensity continuum.[30] Activities like parent-teacher conferences, field trips, and newsletters were utilized much more than parent representation on decision-making boards or parent involvement in curriculum development or selection of teachers. This pattern reflected that more generally found in public education. An exception to this traditional pattern is that more than 60% of the reporting school districts indicated some use of home visits as a means of working with families. This more time- and labor-intensive strategy is far less commonly found in the primary grades.

How Family Friendly Is UPK?

One can also gauge the "family friendliness" of UPK by examining the extent to which the needs of families are taken into consideration when deciding where to locate UPK sites and how much effort to invest in providing sites that offer full-day or wrap-around care for those families needing extended day services. When those criteria are applied, it appears from the data that New York City districts in particular have been working to find a good fit with these kinds of family needs.

Parent Involvement Strategies

Survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the amount of parent involvement taking place in their UPK programs less favorably than they rated other aspects of their programs, assigning an average of 2.8-3.7 on a five-point scale. This suggests that system-wide attention to strengthening the involvement of parents with the UPK programs their children attend would be well-received by site directors, and it could yield real dividends for the program as a whole. The data suggest that UPK directors might be receptive to information and ideas related to "mid-range" strategies like home visiting, satisfaction surveys, and parent support groups, which involve less power sharing than including parents in curriculum discussions and the hiring of teachers but are more intensive than the traditional parent-teacher conference or monthly newsletter.

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[30] For an in-depth classification and discussion of school-related parent involvement activities, see J. Epstein, "School and Family Connections: Theory, Research, and Implications for Integrating Sociologies of Education and Family." In D. Unger and M. Sussman (Eds.), *Families in Community Settings* (New York: Haworth Press, 1990), pp. 99–147.

...the developmental appropriateness of activities engaged in with the UPK children ...is highly valued.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

- *Principle:* The educational services provided by universal prekindergarten programs are developmentally appropriate for the children served by those programs.
- *Principle:* District universal prekindergarten programs include activities that promote early literacy in their curriculum.
- *Principle:* Assessments of participating children use developmentally and culturally appropriate methods, measuring change and progress of individual children rather than making comparisons among those in the group.
- *Principle:* UPK staff work with teachers in the early primary grades to ensure that the developmentally appropriate experiences children have in prekindergarten are carried forward into kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

The data analyzed for this report did not provide very much direct classroom-level information about the extent to which curricular activities at UPK sites were or were not developmentally appropriate. However, there is some indirect evidence that gives cause for optimism. All respondents in New York City and almost 90% in upstate districts listed the staff development topic of early literacy most frequently. In addition, almost all districts in the City and nearly three-quarters of those upstate indicated that they addressed the specific issue of developmentally appropriate practices through staff development.

Data collected about child assessment measures indicated that those most commonly used were generally considered developmentally appropriate assessment strategies for four-year-olds. These included observations/ anecdotal records, developmental checklists, and portfolios. When asked about activities that focus on building continuity from prekindergarten to kindergarten, respondents from a majority of school districts reported the use of joint meetings and workshops for prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and other efforts to ensure curriculum continuity between the two age groups.

These findings suggest that the developmental appropriateness of activities engaged in with the UPK children in these districts is *highly valued*. The data cannot address the question of whether that value was being *translated in practice* in the almost 2000 classrooms included in the Wave One school districts during the 1999-2000 school year.

Teacher Preparation and Support

- *Principle:* The teachers working with children in universal prekindergarten programs understand how preschool children develop and learn, and they have experience working in preschool settings.

...some certified teachers who have been working with older children have transferred into UPK teaching positions...

Critical to the success of UPK are the skills of the teaching staff and the nature of teacher-child relationships. Assurance of high quality in these areas is complicated by the fact that the majority of UPK teachers are not hired by the school districts themselves, but rather by other community organizations. Most of the UPK teachers in the reporting school districts had achieved some form of state teacher certification. However, the findings were not detailed enough to indicate what proportion of these certificates were provisional and what proportion permanent. School-based sites were more likely to have certified teachers than those in other community organizations, especially in New York City. Two-thirds of New York City respondents and nearly half of those upstate indicated that inadequate staff qualifications were a barrier when seeking community-based sites with which to collaborate.

Resources to Support Teacher Certification
These findings raise the question of what information and resources uncertified teachers or teachers-in-training need to become state certified for work with four-year-olds, as well as the extent to which those resources are available in the communities served by these school districts. Important resources would include:

- ☐ the articulation of community college early childhood degree programs with those at the bachelor's level, and bachelor's level degree programs with master's level certification programs;
- ☐ financial assistance to offset the cost of tuition, fees, and educational materials;
- ☐ classes scheduled at times when practicing teachers can access them;
- ☐ information that describes how the higher education programs are linked and where to find the educational supports needed to capitalize on the opportunities they present.

These resources will be needed by provisionally-certified as well as uncertified teachers, because of the time-limited nature of provisional certification. Since the success of the UPK program depends so heavily on the quality of the teachers that staff the classrooms, UPK and other school district administrators must be aware of the challenges involved with meeting the certification requirements. They are encouraged to contribute to local and regional efforts aimed at facilitating and enhancing the pathways to degrees in early childhood education and certification.

Experience Working with Preschool Children
The findings from this report reveal that the UPK teacher corps in the school districts studied is relatively inexperienced, with most districts indicating that their teachers worked with preschoolers for less than five years. There is also evidence that some certified teachers who have been working with older children have transferred into UPK teaching positions when those opportunities became available. Although apparent statewide, these patterns appear to be especially evident in New York City school districts. One reason why teachers choose to work with the younger rather than the older children may be because the class sizes for four-year-olds are smaller and UPK requires the inclusion of a teacher's aide in each classroom.

Teacher Salaries
There was a substantial difference between the salaries paid to UPK teachers who worked for the school district and those who worked at other community sites. Eighty-five percent of upstate New York respondents estimated

that school-based UPK teachers in their districts earned over $30,000 a year, whereas 85% of community-based UPK teachers earned less than $30,000. This is true despite the fact that certification rates in the two sectors were not dramatically different (99% vs. 85%). In New York City, the differences were also substantial, with teachers employed by school districts earning roughly $10,000 more per year than their community-based counterparts.

Professional Development on the Job

The quality of the UPK experience in New York State, and its ultimate success, rests with relatively inexperienced teachers, many of whom are poorly paid and some of whom are under heavy pressure to become state-certified. Other studies have shown that low salaries and difficult working conditions stimulate early education teachers to leave the education field, contributing to the high turn-over rates that plague the profession.[31] Each well-trained teacher who leaves early childhood education represents a loss not only of that professional but also of the investment made in his or her professional preparation. In this context, staff development becomes a vital investment for child development and the preparation of preschool children for primary school. The finding that most school districts are conducting at least some teacher development jointly, bringing teachers hired both by the school district and by collaborating community organizations together for training, comes as especially welcome news under these conditions. District staff development specialists are also providing classroom-based technical assistance. From these data, it is not clear *how much* of the staff development provided by each district includes both community-based and school-based teachers, but only that most districts are providing *some* training jointly.

Staff development efforts are most commonly focused on early literacy, curriculum development, developmentally appropriate practices, and assessment of child progress. In New York City, particular attention is also being paid to the transition from prekindergarten into the primary school, set-up of the classroom environment, classroom management, English as a second language, and programming for a diverse student body. Some of these additional areas of emphasis reflect the particular qualities of life in New York City, diversity of cultural and linguistic groups. There is reason to believe that every effort should be made to maximize these joint training and staff development opportunities, both because of the broad scale improvements in quality they make possible and because of the consensus-building and cross-fertilization that results from such a community-wide investment in young children. This kind of investment stimulates personal and professional growth in educators and increases the probability that they will remain in the field despite inadequate salaries.

There was a substantial difference between the salaries paid to UPK teachers who worked for the school district and those who worked at other community sites.

Key methodologies for supporting teachers in their professional development included the use of conferences and workshops, regular staff development meetings for directors and teachers, visits to classrooms, and direct supervision of teachers. Important strategies employed by the districts included the hiring of a staff developer as part of the district UPK infrastructure and the mentoring of less experienced teachers by more experienced ones.

The survey data do not capture the ways in which districts use several staff development strategies in concert with one another. A comprehensive "strategy profile" might involve regular monthly staff meetings and periodic in-service day conferences for teachers focused on three or four high priority areas of emphasis, enhanced and reinforced by a staff developer who visits classrooms and trains mentor teachers.

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[31] See D. Phillips, D. Mikos, S. Scarr, K. McCartney, and M. Abbott-Shim, "Within and Beyond the Classroom Door: Assessing Quality in Child Care Centers," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 15* (2001), pp. 475-496.

Financing

- *Principle:* Universal Prekindergarten funds are combined with other sources of revenue to make early care and education services more affordable to families who need full-day, full-year care by reducing the amount that parents must pay for those services.
- *Principle:* A portion of Universal Prekindergarten funding is used specifically for program quality enhancement through teacher compensation, staff development, improvements in classroom environments, and family involvement efforts.

When UPK services are delivered through the public schools, these preschool activities are available to children at no cost to their families. Some of the children enrolled in school-based UPK programs also use other preschool arrangements (e.g., center care, family child care, school-based wrap-around care) during that portion of the day not covered by the UPK program. For the parents of those children, the no-cost UPK portion of the overall child care arrangement reduces the amount that they would otherwise have to pay for full-day care.

The Relationship between UPK Funding and Parent Fees

It is unclear from the survey data whether parents with four-year-olds enrolled in full-day child care centers, receiving 2.5 hours of UPK services are paying less for full-day care than parents whose preschoolers are not receiving the UPK portion of that same program. There is some indication from respondents that the per-child revenues available to some participating centers are higher than was the case before the centers became UPK sites, suggesting that the UPK income has not simply replaced the same amount of income from parent fees. It is possible that a variety of parent fee/UPK income combinations are operating in community-based settings, ranging from fee reduction equal to UPK income to little or no fee reduction despite the availability of the added UPK funding. A more fine-grained survey of community-based UPK sites is needed to answer questions about the overall impact of UPK funding on the budgets of child care centers.

The Financial Implications of Certification

It is important to recognize that the certification requirement addressed earlier is likely to increase the expense to community-based organizations of delivering UPK services, especially if the teachers they have had on staff previously were uncertified. It typically costs more to employ a certified than an uncertified teacher. At this point it is unknown whether the salaries paid to preschool teachers working in community-based organizations have gone up as a result of the need to hire more highly-credentialed teachers. This is an important question because low salaries paid to preschool teachers continue to contribute greatly to the high turnover rates in the early childhood education profession. Another important consideration in financing UPK is the cost to uncertified teachers of completing the coursework required for certification. Investments in the higher education infrastructure that provide educational pathways from the Child Development Associate credential to two- and four-year early childhood education degrees and the master's degree needed for permanent certification must also be examined.

Enhancing Teacher Salaries

The significant salary differential between UPK teachers hired by the school system and those working in community-based organizations underscores the need for school district UPK programs to permit the enhancement of teacher salaries by community-based organizations to the extent possible within the limits of available funds. UPK funding to community agencies must not be thought of as helping parents simply by replacing fees that they would otherwise pay for child care, but also as helping both parents and their children though the improved program quality that comes from better teacher compensation. Specifically, higher compensation is associated with less teacher turnover.[32] Poorly paid teachers are easily lured away from education by better-paying jobs in other fields. Each such loss affects the school district doubly, both in the loss of skills developed through previous investment in staff development training by the district and in the added cost of the need to enhance the skills of the new teacher replacement. UPK funding to community-based organizations can benefit children and their parents both by reducing the fees paid by parents needing full-day care *and* by enhancing teacher salaries.

Differences by School Districts in State Allocations Per Child

District UPK final reports provided a broader understanding of the differences in state funding allocation per child in the various Wave One school districts. This range extended from a minimum of $2,700 per child to $4,000 per child, a difference of about one third. It is not clear, however, that the actual classroom-level cost of staffing and delivering UPK services is a third higher in some school districts than in others. If those differences between districts are not that great, then the ones receiving higher per-child subsidies have more "discretionary" funds available for quality enhancement efforts invested at both the classroom (salary enhancement, family involvement, classroom equipment and supplies) and the district (staff developer, content-related workshops, etc.) levels. A detailed analysis of school district UPK budgets should be able to determine whether such "quality enhancement" activities are more likely to be found in the districts receiving higher per-child subsidies than in those at the lower end of the scale.

Recommendations

☆ *Recommendation 1:* Greater emphasis should be given to serving families across the full range of socio-economic levels and family types.

The findings from this study of New York State Universal Prekindergarten in 1999-2000 indicate that school districts have fulfilled their responsibility to involve children living in families with low or very limited incomes. Districts should now give emphasis to serving all families in the school districts with four-year-olds. This will involve not only locating those additional children, but also providing the UPK experience in a form that meets the broader child care needs of families (e.g., full-day center care, links with family child care).

☆ *Recommendation 2:* School districts are strongly encouraged to gather information from parents of three-year-olds about anticipated needs for full-day care and design programming to meet those needs.

Many families are in need of full-day care. However, only between 40% and 50% of the UPK classrooms offered wrap-around care for those children who needed care beyond a half-day program or the hours school is typically in session. How does this affect the ability of all children to participate in UPK? Districts are encouraged to take a close look at the needs of

...higher compensation is associated with less teacher turnover.

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[32] M. Whitebrook, C. Howes, and D. Phillips, *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America. Final report of the National Child Care Staffing Study.* (Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project, 1990).

families with three-year-olds and plan options that will help ensure greater accessibility to UPK. Working closely with community-based providers and exploring transportation possibilities to these locations, especially when UPK is primarily school-based, can help to open up the program to children who currently may not be able to attend.

- ☆ *Recommendation 3:* School districts making considerable use of community-based early care and education programs should be compared with those districts that have elected to keep most of their programs school based. This comparison would provide an understanding of how the decision to invest or not invest in community-based organizations affects the quality and economic viability of those programs.

The findings indicate that UPK funds and other resources are being invested in community-based organizations in ways that have high likelihood of enhancing the quality of the preschool programs in those settings. The data also document that one third of upstate Wave One UPK school districts believe that UPK services should be primarily school-based. Of interest would be a comparison between child care centers of similar quality in districts that are more school-based and those that are more community-based. This would not only make more visible the "added value" of the UPK funding but might also uncover any positive or negative consequences associated with having to operate child care centers along with a school-based UPK program.

- ☆ *Recommendation 4:* Examples of good practice should be gathered from UPK school districts in all of the key areas of program implementation (e.g., financing strategies, joint staff development approaches, child recruitment methods, accountability techniques, developmentally appropriate teaching strategies, collaborations with community-based organizations, assessment efforts, articulation of higher education teacher preparation programs), and disseminated throughout New York State.

In the process of gathering data about UPK implementation across New York State, the research team has uncovered dozens of examples of exciting ways to meet the many challenges involved in implementing a prekindergarten program as ambitious and complex as the one being carried out here in New York. There is currently no way to gather information about these important innovations systematically, organize it in useable form, and disseminate it to all the school districts that are working so hard to meet these challenges. It is essential that the lessons learned in isolation be shared among local UPK policy-makers and practitioners so that unnecessary mistakes can be avoided and good ideas built upon.

- ☆ *Recommendation 5:* Classroom-level information regarding the extent to which UPK teachers believe in and are using developmentally appropriate, child-centered models of preschool education in their work with UPK children should be collected and included in annual reports to the State.

Child-centered instructional models produce both short- and long-term gains in children on a number of educational and social outcomes not seen in children taught with more teacher-directed or eclectic approaches.[33] These outcomes include greater readiness for kindergarten and first grade, academic abilities, communication skills, and social behaviors. Information about teacher beliefs and practices is relatively simple to gather with a teacher survey focused on teacher goals for development, how children learn, autonomy of children, the teacher's role, and peer learning.[34] Teacher preparation and staff development efforts can be directed at helping teachers understand child-centered models of instruction, and explain to parents why these approaches are most appropriate for young children.[35]

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[33] Marcon, 1999; Henry, et al., in review.

☆ *Recommendation 6:* School districts should invest in comprehensive child assessment strategies that monitor children's physical well-being, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, cognition, and general knowledge on multiple occasions across a wide variety of classroom activities.[36]

Findings from this survey indicate that most Wave One school districts are using assessment strategies that measure children's progress against developmental criteria using observations, portfolios, developmental profiles and anecdotal records rather than norm-referenced standardized tests. It is important that such systems include parent input, teacher observation, regular collection of children's work, and summaries of this information at several points in time.[37]

☆ *Recommendation 7:* Efforts to mobilize prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers together in developing and implementing ways to smooth and enhance the transition from prekindergarten into the kindergarten classroom should be expanded.

Findings from this survey indicated that many school districts are attending to the issue of how to relate the curricular aspects of prekindergarten with the learning goals and environment of kindergarten, as well as the best ways to assist students with this transition. The transition question involves not only child readiness for kindergarten but also kindergarten classroom readiness for children who have spent a year growing and learning in a developmentally appropriate context. Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers need opportunities to share their developmental and learning goals for children with one another and to explore possibilities for the use of similar and complementary methods for reaching those goals. UPK school districts are urged to make this dialogue a priority during the next several years.

☆ *Recommendation 8:* All staff development activities sponsored by each school district should be made available to all of the UPK teachers in the district regardless of the type of site in which they teach.

Most UPK school districts are conducting some staff development activities that bring their school- and community-based teachers together in one group, or they provide the same kinds of in-classroom teacher support to both school-based and community-based teachers. Such joint training and cross-sector outreach builds a sense of identity among UPK teachers, improves the quality of preschool education community-wide, and encourages teachers to support and assist one another in their efforts to improve their practice. School districts are urged to expand the use of staff development as a way of building unity of purpose among prekindergarten teachers throughout the community and linking them with their colleagues teaching kindergarten and first grade.

[34] Marcon, 1999.

[35] High/Scope and Creative Curriculum are two examples of nationally known, child-centered approaches to preschool education. See D. P. Weikart, L. Rogers, C. Adcock, and D. McClelland, D. *The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum: A Framework for Preschool Teachers* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1971), and D. T. Dodge, *The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood* (Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, 1992).

[36] Kagan, et al., 1995.

[37] New York State Universal Prekindergarten Assessment Meeting, 2000.

- ☆ *Recommendation 9:* Family involvement strategies should be addressed more fully and systematically in the staff development efforts of school districts and implemented with greater intensity.

Responses to the survey question exploring the kinds of UPK-sponsored activities that families are involved with in New York State indicated that these activities were most likely to fall on the less intensive end of the high intensity-low intensity continuum. The survey data suggest that UPK teachers might be receptive to information and ideas related to "mid-range" strategies like home visiting, satisfaction surveys, and parent support groups, which involve less power sharing than does including parents in curriculum discussions and the hiring of teachers but are more intensive than the traditional parent-teacher conference or monthly newsletter.

- ☆ *Recommendation 10:* School district UPK staff should work with other stakeholders in early care and education (e.g., higher education, child care councils, teachers, site directors) to make the pathways to teacher certification clearer and the certificate more achievable.

This process may involve providing leadership to accurately map the pathways to teacher certification, identify the barriers to movement along those pathways, and work as a team with others to reduce those barriers.

- ☆ *Recommendation 11:* School districts are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to discrepancies in teacher salaries between school-based and community-based UPK programs and seek ways to bolster the salaries of UPK teachers in community-based programs.

The findings illustrated that for both upstate and New York City districts, school-based teachers earned more than those in community-based sites. Of concern is that teachers in community-based programs will move to the public schools once positions become available, further exacerbating the high turnover rates in early care and education settings. Furthermore, many certified teachers working in community-based settings are not earning a living wage, forcing them to seriously consider leaving the field of early childhood education. Gathering data on teacher salaries at the community-based sites during the Request for Proposal (RFP) process will inform district UPK coordinators of the extent to which discrepancies exist.

- ☆ *Recommendation 12:* A study should be conducted to determine the extent to which the implementation of UPK quality enhancement approaches such as classroom-level teacher preparation strategies (observation, direct consultation), mentorship programs, classroom equipment start-up grants, home visiting, hiring family workers, and increases in teacher salaries are associated with higher levels of funding per child received by a school district. If this relationship is documented, then the state should consider an increase in the minimum amount per child awarded school districts for the delivery of UPK services in order to make quality enhancement investments possible for all participating school districts.

The study findings documented that UPK teachers are relatively inexperienced at working with four-year-olds, although most of them have provisional or permanent state certification. In this context, enhancement efforts can be expected to have a significant impact on the capacity of UPK teachers to fully support appropriate child development and to prepare children for kindergarten. If the $2,700 minimum per-child allotment provided some school districts for delivery of UPK services is not adequate to support these kinds of quality enhancement efforts, then the allotment should be increased accordingly.

☆ *Recommendation 13:* School districts are encouraged to enter into multi-year contracts with those community-based preschool programs that have demonstrated the ability to offer prekindergarten services that meet the standard set by the school district.

To survive economically, community-based preschool programs must have stable sources of funding. To be able to retain teachers and improve quality over time, these programs need to be able to plan their budgets beyond the end of each school year. The parents they serve also need to be able to estimate how much they will have to pay in child care costs in the upcoming year. Stability would be enhanced if school districts would inform centers with demonstrated success at providing UPK services that they could expect to receive UPK funding for several years into the future, contingent upon available funds and continued satisfactory performance. Payment of an advance amount at the beginning of the school year is also recommended as a way of making it possible for community-based programs with little cash flow margins to cover costs incurred during the first three months of UPK operations.

☆ *Recommendation 14:* The state is encouraged to amend transportation aid to allow for reimbursement of the transportation of four-year-olds, consistent with existing school-age reimbursement policies and procedures.

The lack of transportation needed to get children to UPK sites continues to be identified by UPK district coordinators and directors as a barrier to program access. Although traditionally considered a challenge in rural school districts, lack of transportation is also a problem in urban districts for those family child care providers who cannot transport the four-year-olds in their care to a half-day UPK program at another site.

Future Research Efforts

This research is part of a larger study that includes intensive interviews in four case study districts, surveys and interviews with child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state, and additional surveys with districts in years three and four of UPK. Of critical interest is what districts are doing to carry out their UPK programs, why and how districts have come to develop the programs as they have, and the impacts of UPK on the overall early care and education system.

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Rethinking the Brain: New Insights into Early Development. (1997). New York: Families and Work Institute.

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APPENDIX □ A

Annotated Bibliography

Universal Prekindergarten Planning Guides

Early Childhood Strategic Group Publications:

- Klinger, N. (1999). *A Guide to Early Childhood Teacher Preparation and Certification*
- Kolben, N., and Paprocki, C. (2000). *Meeting the Challenge of Child Care Expansion in New York City 1999-2000: A Forum and Dialogue*
- Mitchell, A. (1998). *Implementing Universal PreK in New York City: Blended Funding and Other Financial Considerations*
- Paprocki, C. (1999). *Implementing Strategies for Universal Prekindergarten: The Advisory Board's Role*
- Russell-Browne, A., & Lederman, N. (1999). *A Guide to Cost Allocation Procedures: Implementing Strategies for Universal Prekindergarten*

Published by the Early Childhood Strategic Group, these publications provide useful information to advisory board members, school administrators, and other planning UPK programs. The focus is on program implementation and effective use of resources. Available from Child Care Inc., 275 Seventh Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10001, (212)-929-7604 x3011.

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy Publications:

- *Steps to Universal Prekindergarten Guidebook: A Resource for Superintendents, School Boards, Prekindergarten Policy Advisory Boards, Teachers, Early Childhood Professionals, Policymakers, Parents, and Citizens, Vols. I and II* (1998). Albany: State Communities Aid Assocation (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy).

Published by the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (formerly State Communities Aid Association), Volume I presents a step-by-step guide to establishing a UPK program, from appointment of the Policy Advisory Board to submission of the application for state funding. Also described are various program options, ideas for publicizing the new program, and other information that will help advisory boards "make the case" for a collaborative and universal prekindergarten program. Volume II, a companion guidebook to Volume I, outlines five ingredients for a successful UPK program. These include leadership, creative financing, learning from others, diverse program models, and involving parents. Attention is given to blended funding and other financial considerations.

Available from the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 150 State Street, Fourth Floor, Albany, NY 12207, (518)-463-1896, www.scaany.org

Curriculum

- ☐ Bredecamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Revised Edition*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

This reference is based on a concrete, play-oriented approach to working with young children and is reflective of what current research suggests are best practices with young children. It was developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the primary professional organization for teachers of children from birth through age 8.

- ☐ Derman-Sparks, L., and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989). Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

This publication deals with the issue of bias and how to ensure that one sets up and operates an anti-bias classroom.

- ☐ Jones, E., and Nimmo, J. (1994). *Emergent Curriculum*. Washington, DC: National Associationfor the Education of Young Children.

The principles of developmentally appropriate practices are brought to light. The publication serves as a guide to teachers who are working to make plans and develop curricula that draw on children's interests and activities versus mapping them out months in advance.

These three NAEYC books listed above are inexpensive and can be ordered by calling 1-800-424-2460.

- ☐ *Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy In the Early Years* (1998). Albany: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department.

Highlighted in this handbook are the components of quality preschool education, including learning-centered environments, curriculum, and assessment. Through specific examples and a wide range of suggestions, the reader is aided in implementing creative, developmentally-appropriate classroom practices. Planning considerations and professional development are discussed as well. Available from Publications Sales Desk, Room 309, Education Building, Albany, NY 12234.

Assessment

- ☐ Meisels, S. J., Jablon, J., Marsden, D. B., Dichtelmiller, M. L., and Dorfman, A. (1994). *The Work Sampling System*. Ann Arbor, MI: Rebus Inc.
- ☐ Meisels, S. J., Marsden, D. B., Wiske, M. S., and Henderson, L. W. (1997). *The Early Screening Inventory Revised*. Ann Arbor, MI: Rebus Inc.

One of the most appropriate systems used by the early care and education field is the *Work Sampling System*. This is a systematic way for teachers to observe children and it includes a checklist, portfolio information, and a report form that can be used with parents. He also developed the *Early Screening Inventory* to help assess school readiness. A free information packet about this system can be ordered by calling 1-800-435-3085.

Preschool Education

- ☐ Bowman, B., Donovan, M. S., and Burns, M. S. (Eds.) (2000). *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

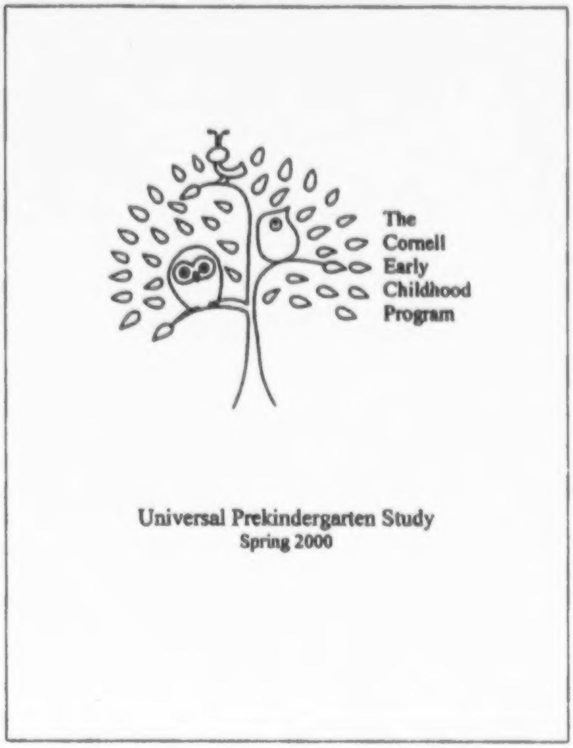
This book presents current research findings and discussion about the education of young children in the United States. Issues of individual and cultural variation, program quality, curriculum, assessment, teacher preparation, and program and practice standards are addressed. Included are specific recommendations for enhancing early care and education.

- ☐ Schulman, K., Blank, H., and Ewen, D. (1999). *Seeds of Success: State Prekindergarten Initiatives 1998-1999.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of state-funded prekindergarten initiatives across the country. Addressed are issues of funding, quality, accessibility, and collaboration. Detailed information on pre-k programs on a state-by-state basis is provided as well.

APPENDIX ◻ B

Universal Prekindergarten Survey



The Cornell Early Childhood Program

Universal Prekindergarten Study
Spring 2000

The Cornell Early Childhood Program
G63 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607)-255-2457
[illegible]@cornell.edu

Welcome to the Cornell Universal Prekindergarten Study!

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the implementation of Universal Prekindergarten in New York State. We greatly appreciate your participation in the study, and we look forward to hearing back from you. Please remember that your responses will be kept confidential. Your name, school district, or community will not be associated with any results.

The survey is divided into a number of sections. Parts 1 and 2 have questions about the children in your district's UPK program and the sites and classrooms used. Additional sections address teachers, staff, and staff development; curriculum and programming; planning and financing; and community collaboration. In addition, we are interested in your satisfaction with various aspects of UPK. At the end of the survey, there is a chart where we ask you to verify and expand a little on information provided by the State Education Department about your UPK area.

We realize that the questionnaire will take some time, but we do appreciate your efforts to give us information that will be helpful in better understanding UPK.

Thank you very much!

Please return the survey to us in the envelope provided. Keep a copy for your records in case we need to contact you for any additional information or clarification.

Section 1: Children Served by Universal Prekindergarten

In order to better understand your district's UPK program, we ask that you please answer the following questions.

1. How did your district recruit children into the UPK program? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ In-person visits to families
- ☐ Letters sent to families
- ☐ Newspaper, radio, or cable TV announcements
- ☐ Notices at community centers, agencies, or libraries
- ☐ Notices at religious organizations
- ☐ Notices at stores
- ☐ Referred by social workers, school personnel, and other service providers
- ☐ Waiting lists from other agencies (Head Start, EPK, etc.)
- ☐ Enrolled in existing programs
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____________

1a. Which strategies were most effective? (List up to 3)

1. ____________ 2. ____________ 3. ____________

2. What criteria did your district use when selecting children for UPK? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Free or reduced lunch guidelines
- ☐ Other income indicators
- ☐ Lottery
- ☐ Disabilities or other special needs
- ☐ Family characteristics (children of teen parents, foster children, etc.)
- ☐ Currently unserved or ineligible for other preschool programs
- ☐ Neighborhood or geographic proximity to UPK site
- ☐ No previous preschool experience
- ☐ Child already attending chosen site
- ☐ Other (please specify) ____________

3. Did your district's selection criteria for UPK change from Year 1 (1998-99) to Year 2 (1999-2000)?

☐ yes ☐ no

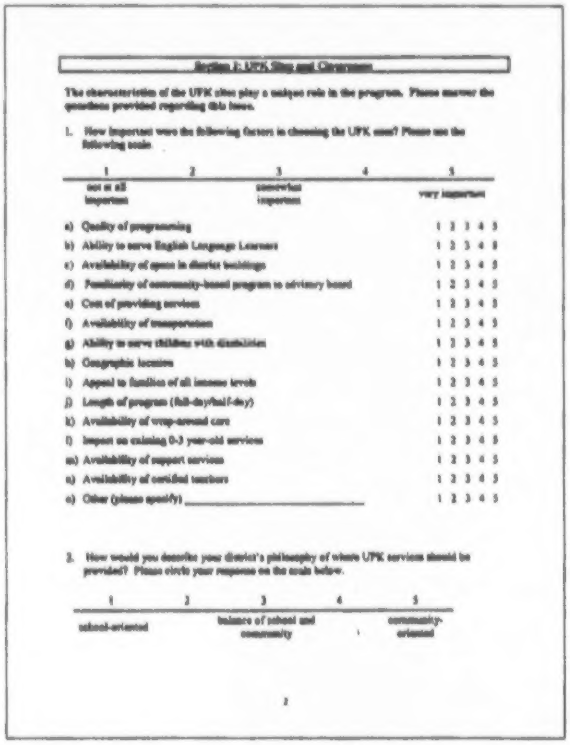
3a. If yes, how?

____

4. Please indicate the approximate number of children in your UPK program in the following categories: (refer to Student Information System)

American Indian/Alaskan Native	___	Hispanic	___
Black (not Hispanic origin)	___	White	___
Asian/Pacific Islander	___	English Language Learners	___

1



Section 2: UPK Sites and Classrooms

The characteristics of the UPK sites play a unique role in the program. Please answer the questions provided regarding this issue.

1. How important were the following factors in choosing the UPK sites? Please use the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5
not at all important		somewhat important		very important

a) Quality of programming 1 2 3 4 5
b) Ability to serve English Language Learners 1 2 3 4 5
c) Availability of space in district buildings 1 2 3 4 5
d) Familiarity of community-based program to advisory board 1 2 3 4 5
e) Cost of providing services 1 2 3 4 5
f) Availability of transportation 1 2 3 4 5
g) Ability to serve children with disabilities 1 2 3 4 5
h) Geographic location 1 2 3 4 5
i) Appeal to families of all income levels 1 2 3 4 5
j) Length of program (full-day/half-day) 1 2 3 4 5
k) Availability of wrap-around care 1 2 3 4 5
l) Impact on existing 0-3 year-old services 1 2 3 4 5
m) Availability of support services 1 2 3 4 5
n) Availability of certified teachers 1 2 3 4 5
o) Other (please specify) ____________ 1 2 3 4 5

2. How would you describe your district's philosophy of where UPK services should be provided? Please circle your response on the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5
school-oriented		balance of school and community		community-oriented

2

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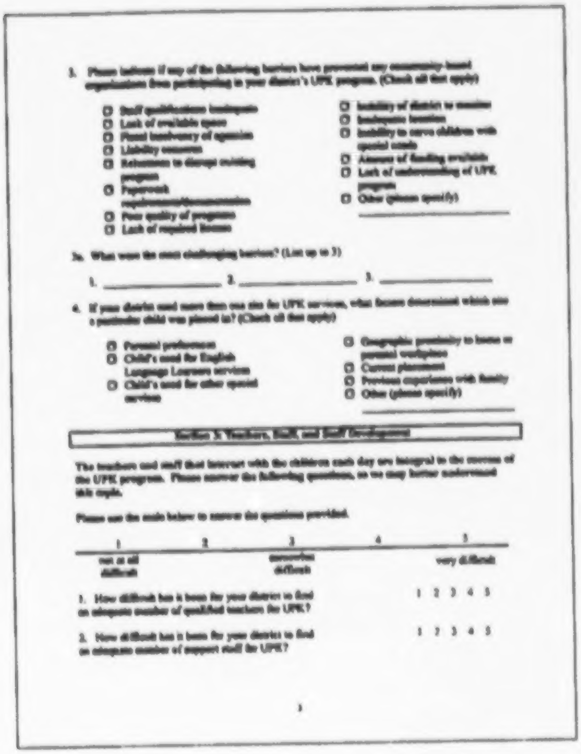

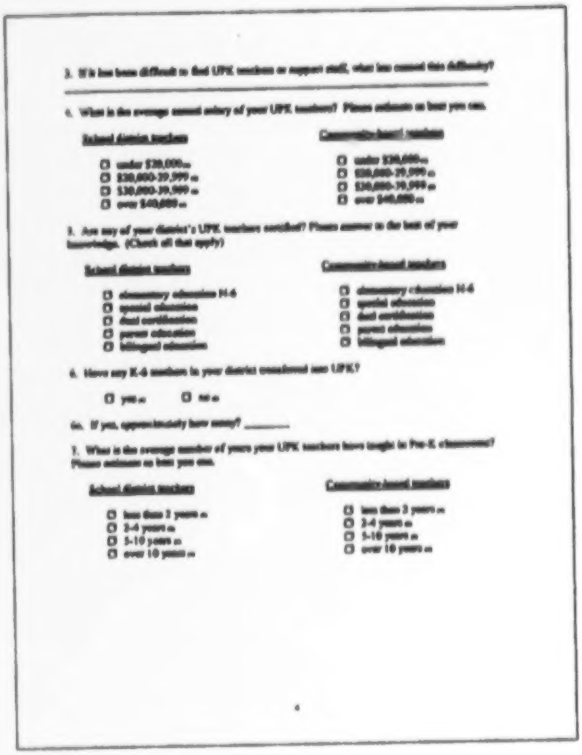

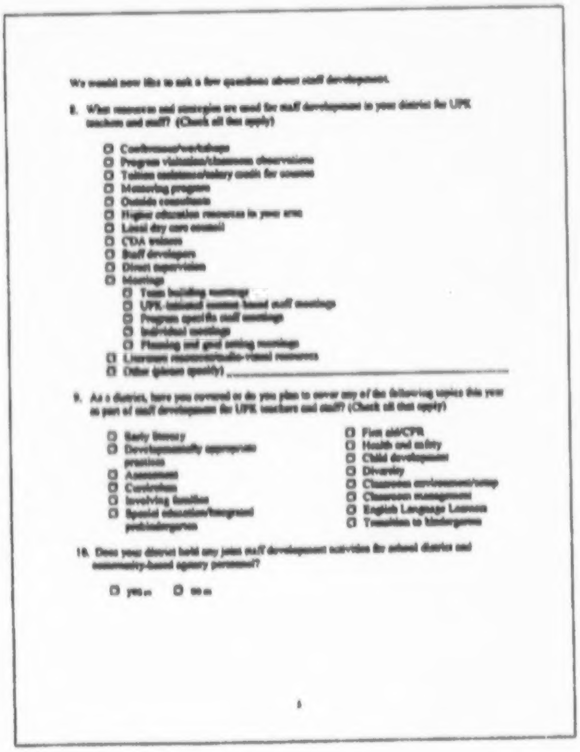

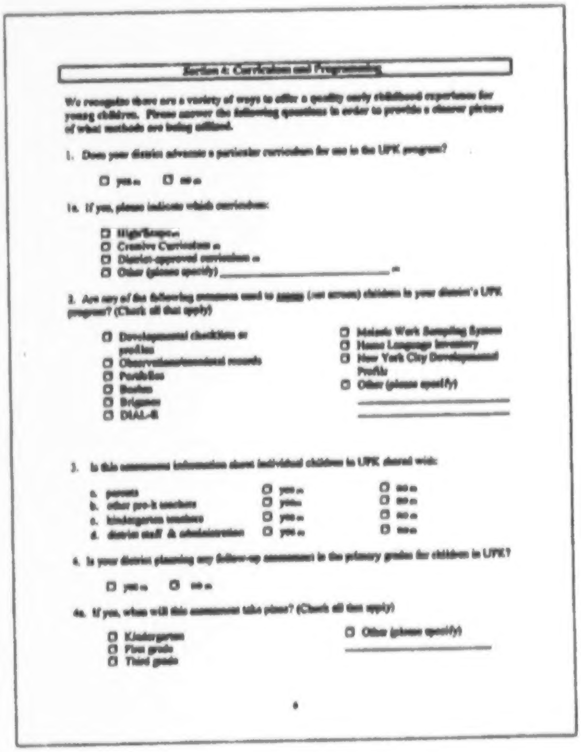

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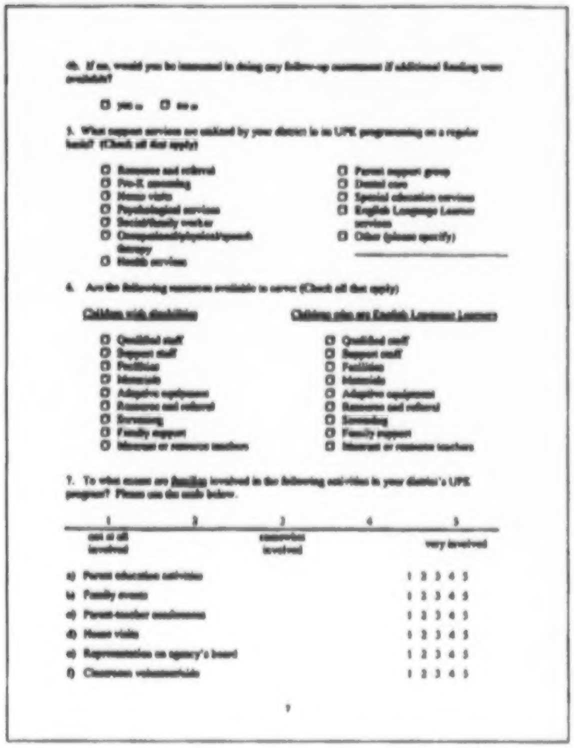

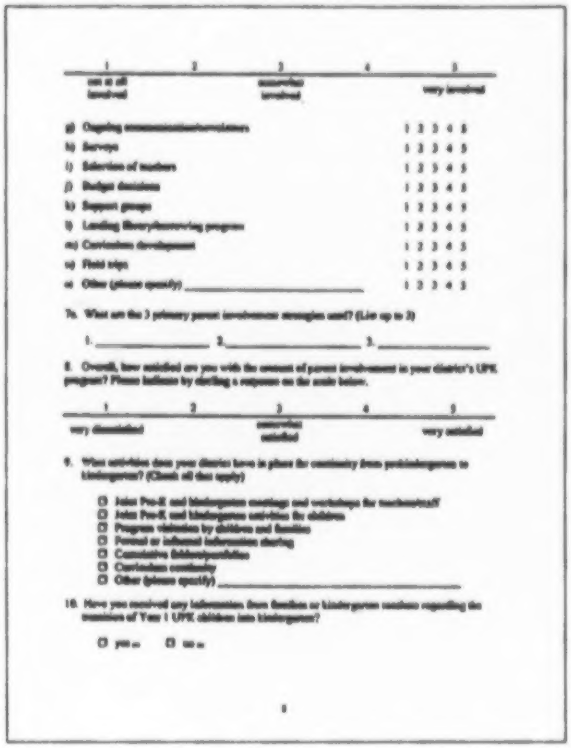

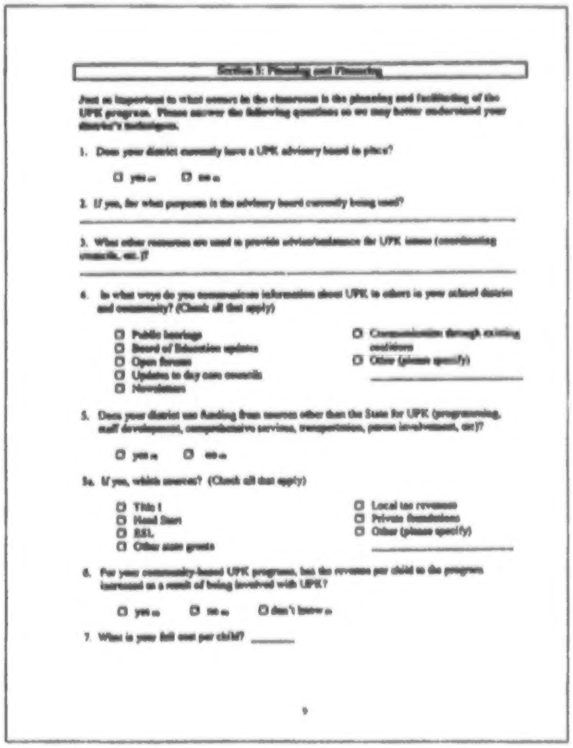

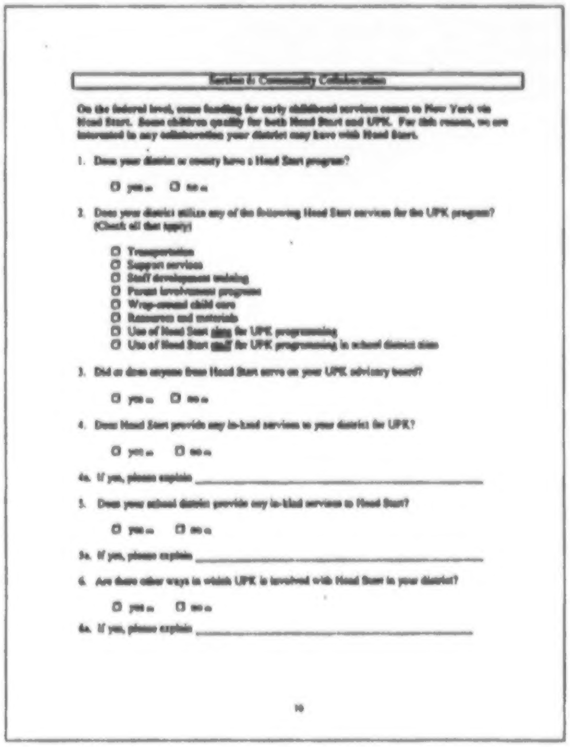

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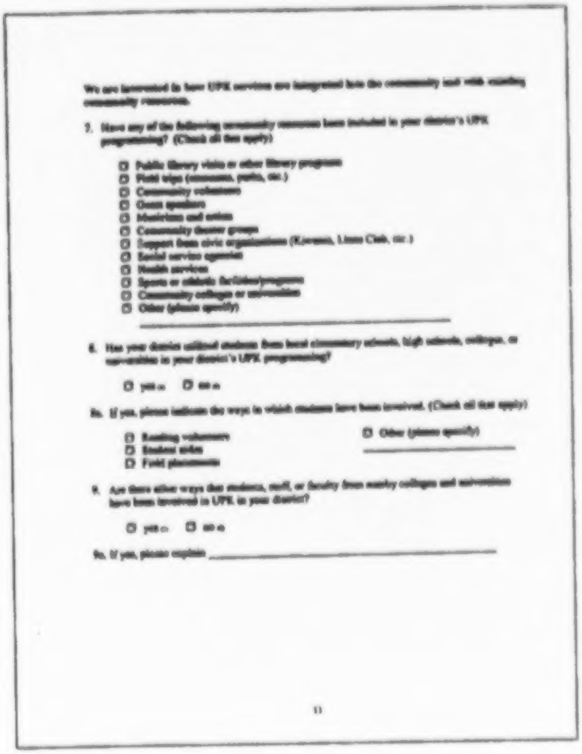

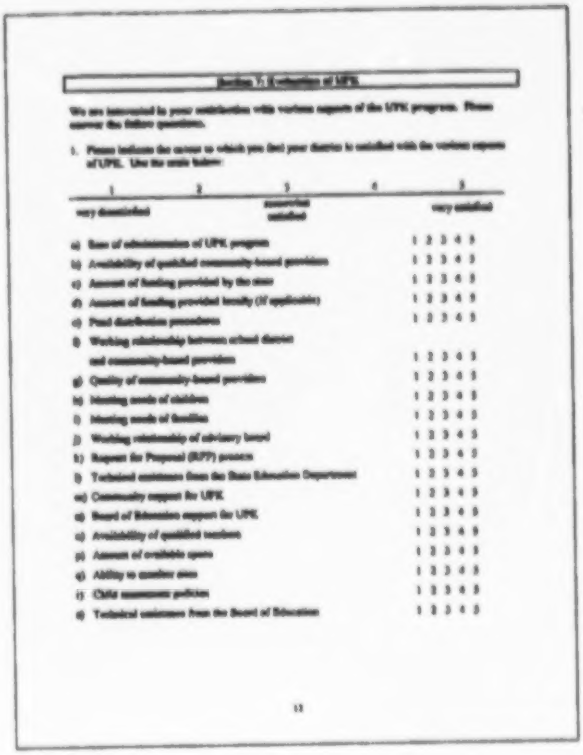

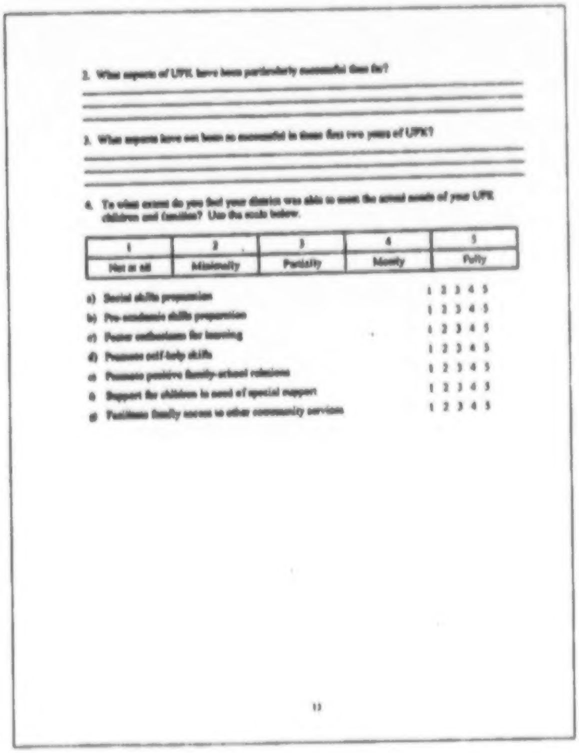

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About the Authors

Dr. Kristi Lekies

Dr. Kristi Lekies is the research associate with the Cornell Early Childhood Program. Her responsibilities consist of program administration, coordination of research projects, grant writing, data analysis and management, publications and presentations, and supervision of student research.

Along with universal prekindergarten and early care and education, Dr. Lekies research interests also include rural families, community and environmental influences on human development, and cross-cultural perspectives on children and families.

She holds a Ph.D. in human development and family studies from Iowa State University, a master's degree in home economics from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her background includes research in the former East Germany as a Fulbright scholar, as well as work in the areas of foster care, child abuse and neglect, and independent living skills education for adolescents.

Dr. Moncrieff Cochran

Dr. Moncrieff Cochran studies the environmental systems affecting parent and child development, including early care and education settings and personal social networks. He uses the findings from this research and the work of others to develop empowerment-oriented ECE and family support programs. Cochran received his bachelor's degree in social relations from Harvard College, and master's and Ph.D. degrees in psychology and education from the University of Michigan.

In 1990 he and his colleagues published *Extending Families: the Social Networks of Parents and their Children* (Cambridge University Press), which presents the findings from 10 years of social network research. His edited volume *The International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs*, based on case studies from 29 nations, was published by Greenwood Press in 1993. In 1997, he and his wife Eva published *Child Care that Works: A Parent's Guide to Finding Quality Child Care* (Robins Lane Press/Gryphon House).

Dr. Cochran is presently completing *Finding Our Way: American Early Care and Education in Global Perspective*, which provides a philosophical framework and policy recommendations for U.S. early care and education in the 21st century. He is currently a board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

About the Cornell Early Childhood Program

The Cornell Early Childhood Program is a network of Cornell faculty and staff, other university faculty, policy-makers, and practitioners linked together through their interest in young children and their families.

The mission of the program is to integrate applied research with teaching, extension outreach, and demonstration in ways that promote greater understanding of young children and their families, and contribute to policies and practices that enhance child growth and development.

Five activity areas of focus are:

- ☐ Early development, care and education of children from low-income families
- ☐ Early childhood care and education as universal family and community needs
- ☐ Family support in the child care context
- ☐ Integration of early childhood care and education strategies
- ☐ International exchange and comparison in the early childhood arena

Support for the Cornell Early Childhood Program currently comes from the Cornell Department of Human Development and the Cornell College of Human Ecology, grants and contracts, and the generous contributions of Cornell alumni.

The Cornell Early Childhood Program

Goals and Interests

The goals of the Cornell Early Childhood Program are to carry out research, extension, teaching, and service activities that improve the lives of young children and their families. Five general areas are of particular interest and concern:

- Early development, care, and education of children from low-income families;
- Early childhood care and education as universal family and community needs;
- Family support in the child care context;
- Integration of early childhood care and education strategies; and
- International exchange and comparison on matters regarding early childhood.

In pursuing these interest areas, students and faculty learn more about relevant public policies and the policy-making process so as to contribute new knowledge to those involved in policy development and implementation.

For More Information

For more information about the Cornell Early Childhood Program, please contact:

Moncrieff Cochran, Director
Cornell University
College of Human Ecology
Department of Human Development
Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853-4401
Phone: 607 255-2457
E-mail: cecp@cornell.edu
Fax: 607 255-8767
Website: www.human.cornell.edu/hd/cecp

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